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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THREE ALBERTA TEACHERS: LIVES AND THOUGHTS

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THREE ALBERTA TEACHERS: LIVES AND THOUGHTS submitted by PHYLLIS MARIA ELENA LA FLEUR in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

This study provides information about the nature of education in Alberta--past, present, ideal, and future--according to the experiences and perceptions of three significant Alberta educators, Thomas F. Rieger, Agnes Lynass, and Earl W. Buxton. Included is an account of their lives, beginning with their early memories of parents, communities, and schools in the rural Alberta of the first decades of the twentieth century and encompassing their current activities and concerns as the province moves closer to the next century. The account is a detailed mixture of experience and thought which forms an outline of educational practice as Alberta society and its schools changed from an era predominantly agrarian to one predominantly technological and industrial. The three teachers give information about their encounters with outstanding educators in the past as well as an assessment of the contributions that these educators made in their efforts to realize universal education in the province. Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton offer insight into current educational issues and present practice. Their discussions of the ideal and their prophecies of the future in Alberta education offer vision and the challenge of new directions. The discourse of the three teachers is presented as a written record of their lives and thoughts--largely in the words they themselves used. The valuable insights into Alberta education provided by Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton indicate that further studies based upon oral history obtained from living educators would be a worth while contribution to education in the province.

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CHAPTER I

THREE ALBERTA TEACHERS: LIVES AND THOUGHTS AN INTRODUCTION

Background

Each year since 1971 about four or five hundred teachers retired from Alberta schools. Most of these teachers had taught for thirty-five years before their retirement. An article in the Edmonton Journal, "School's Out For Twelve Principals," (June 5, 1976: 25) estimated that the retirement of twelve principals represented the loss of "nearly half a millennium of experience." If a similar calculation were made on the basis of the total number of teachers who retire each year, the combined years of experience would be even more impressive. While this kind of arithmetic is intriguing, it needs to be taken together with the words of a person who speaks of his retirement in a personal and moving way.

> The combination of age sixty and thirty-five years service seems a satisfactory time to retire from the teaching profession. Sometimes the prospect seemed a long way off and something of a dream, but, then, suddenly, the writing of a resignation, and then the turning over of the keys to the school, the situation was very real. The university education, the teaching certificate, the years of experience--the teacher's job requisites--in one act seemed to have no marketable value. There was no good will to sell, and there remained many ideas to contribute to the improvement of education in our schools that now might remain only ideas . . . I'll be an interested observer of education in the years to come. Maybe there will be opportunities for me to contribute in some way (Green, 1974: 34).

The present study arose from the conviction that the lives and thoughts of teachers who had devoted a lifetime to the classroom would

be worth discovering and recording, and that failure to do so would mean a loss not easy to afford in education. The study set out to investigate the perceptions of three Alberta teachers, two of whom had retired and one of whom was close to retirement, about the nature of education in the province. All three have been widely recognized as superior teachers.

These three educators--Thomas F. Rieger, Agnes Lynass, and Earl W. Buxton--provide an exciting and virtually inexhaustible source of information about many aspects of education, since they have learned and taught in the prairie schools from early times. Their memories of their families and communities, the schools they attended, their teaching careers, the influences--early and later--upon them, the significant educators they have met and worked with are a fascinating study. And then there are those changes which have taken place in Alberta from the time of the homesteaders--the Depression years, the War years, the prosperous years of the fifties and sixties--all of these have affected education; and the three teachers have lived through these years, have taught in the different kinds of schools, and have been involved in the major issues. The seventies have witnessed a good deal of unrest in Alberta education. There seem to be troublesome problems facing the schools. Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton, with their historical perspective, their range of experience, and their acknowledged status as excellent teachers, provide insight into some of these vexatious questions and concerns. Also, the three teachers are provocative in their speculations. What approaches the ideal in education? What are some directions which would improve education? Where is education headed in the eighties?

What predictions can be made about the twenty-first century? The study of these educators, whose candour, humour, and compassionate humanity are among their outstanding characteristics, forms a record of inspiration. Their knowledge and their delight in living, in teaching, and in thoughtful conversation are a source of wisdom.

THREE ALBERTA TEACHERS: A PREVIEW

Each of the three educators is roughly contemporary with the others: Agnes Lynass was born right after World War I, Thomas Rieger in 1912, and Earl Buxton in 1910. Each grew up on the prairies and attended rural schools in the opening decades of the century. All three attended normal school and began their teaching careers in the one-room schools of the Depression years. Starting from these common bases, their later careers show interesting divergence.

Agnes Lynass

Agnes Lynass, who sums up her professional career by saying that she has "spanned the changes and endured," began her lifetime commitment to the classroom in 1936 in the school at Lousana. She spent the war years in The Royal Canadian Air Force, stationed overseas as well as in Canada. Since her return to civilian life, Lynass has chosen to devote herself to teaching high school and to the exceptional students she regards herself to have been "fortunate to teach who challenged me to challenge them." She is convinced that she has learned more from her students' "insistence upon tolerance, integrity, humour, and a certain element of love" than her students have from her. All the other aspects

of her professional career she dismisses as "incidental." (The quotations are from a telephone interview with Lynass on January 16, 1977.) In addition to being an exceptionally talented teacher of English, Lynass herself has been a lifelong student at universities in Canada and elsewhere.

Thomas Rieger

Thomas Rieger spent over forty years in education, including seven on the executive staff of The Alberta Teachers' Association which followed more than thirty years of teaching in small schools, in the towns and villages of Alberta. Rieger was President of the Association from 1963 to 1964. In 1973, he was selected Educator of the Year by The University of Alberta chapter of Phi Delta Kappa. This important honour is in recognition of outstanding service in education. In an interview (March 16, 1977), Dr. Ken Bride of The Alberta Teachers' Association explained that "Rieger was chosen because the selection committee was convinced that he was the most deserving candidate of all those considered for that year." Dr. Bride added that "the award was not given on the basis of long service only, but upon the quality of his contribution and its impact on improving education in the province."

Earl Buxton

Earl Buxton began his remarkable professional career by teaching in 1929 at Cloverdale School, the first of several rural schools in which he taught. Buxton's rural experience included being principal of the high schools in Radway and Fort Saskatchewan. Subsequent to teaching in Edmonton junior and senior high schools, he taught in the experimental

demonstration school which was part of the new Faculty of Education. In 1948, Buxton became a member of The Faculty of Education at The University of Calgary. He joined the staff of the Edmonton Faculty of Education in 1956. Buxton is well known for his talent as a cartoonist as well as for his signal commitment to education in the province. Prior to his retirement in 1976, Buxton was a gifted and inspired university teacher whose former students honour and cherish the memory of his warmth, brilliance, and transcendent ability to teach. Sheffield's study (1974) identifies Buxton as one of the foremost university teachers in Canada. In addition to teaching, Buxton has provided a distinguished series of textbooks for use in junior and senior high school English courses.

The experiences and contributions of the three educators make them interesting exemplars of education in the province. They were selected for this study partially because the divergence of their later careers afforded a diversity of perspective which includes the public-school classroom, The Alberta Teachers' Association, and The Faculty of Education. Predominantly, however, they were chosen because of their excellence and achievement in education. The lives and thoughts of such educators should prove a considerable addition to the already existing record of teaching and teachers in the province.

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO THE STUDY

Introduction

The review of the literature related to the present study reveals a tradition of historical and biographical work which explores the

development of education from its beginnings and which examines the lives and thoughts of famous educators. There are countless surveys which provide information about the origins and evolution of education from the Athenians and the Spartans to the present day. There are innumerable anthologies of great educators whose lives still inspire, whose philosophies still challenge. The review also indicates a similar tradition in Canadian and in Alberta literature about education: Canada has its historical and biographical studies of education and educators; and Alberta has begun its own record of the history of education in the province and of the biographies of important educators. The following review of the literature presents a brief sample representative of the wider professional tradition and a somewhat more extensive review of the literature about education in Alberta. Many of the Alberta studies have been summarized rather briefly to avoid repetitiousness since many of the issues and educators are dealt with more fully in later chapters.

Four General Studies of Education and Educators

Graves (1926) is representative of the chronological survey of education from its tribal origins to the progressivists. Cole (1950), Lantz (1971), and Meyer (1975) are typical of the anthologies which include a group of significant educators, usually from Socrates to Dewey, and chronicle their lives and thoughts, showing the influences upon them as well as their influences upon educational practice and thought.

Graves presents an outline of educational institutions, practices, movements, and leaders, focusing chiefly upon the last two centuries and

upon American education. Educational theories and pure theorists are omitted in favour of stressing the relationship between educators in the past and American education in the late 1920's. The vast scope limits the amount of information about any single period or educator, but makes for a most useful handbook which provides a convenient time frame. Graves (1962: 218-219) is also particularly valuable in his tracing of contemporary practice to its sources, pointing out how the thought has been adapted and modified; for example, while he sees the effect of Rousseau's philosophy reflected in the thinking of Pestalozzi, Herbart, and Froebel as well as in the development of progressive education, Graves indicates that progressivists have since chosen to abandon Rousseau's idea of educating children in isolation from society.

The lives, personalities, and thoughts of twenty-three, primarily European, educators are presented by Cole (1950) in commendable detail with generous quotations from the writing of the educators. The detail and the quotations help to realize Cole's aim (1950: 639) of providing teachers with "a treasure trove of the world's best thoughts about education." Cole (1950: x) is also interested in "creating an enthusiasm for things educational and of developing a profound respect for the profession of teaching."

Lantz (1971), who demonstrates some flair in effective portraiture of twenty-three famous figures, and Meyer (1975), who concentrates upon the educational thinking of a similar assortment of acknowledged practitioners and theorists, are both representative anthologies which, like Cole, emphasize biography and philosophy. Lantz and Meyer concentrate upon the relationship between thought and its translation into practice;

they also assess the influence of great educators in the formation of a professional heritage.

Graves, Cole, Lantz, and Meyer have been included as examples of the historical and biographical studies which form a major part of the literature in education. Their work has been reviewed in chronological order as an indication of the continuing interest in this kind of literature.

Three Canadian Studies of Education and Educators

Phillips (1975) and Patterson, Chalmers, and Friesen (1974) are Canadian exemplars of the historical and biographical approach in literature about education. Sheffield (1974), who includes some biographical detail, departs from history and biography in concentrating upon current educators and publishing essays written by them. Phillips like Graves (1926) employs the organization of the historical survey. Patterson, Chalmers, and Friesen, like Cole (1950), Lantz (1971), and Meyer (1975), focus upon biography with the profiles of the selected educators arranged chronologically.

Phillips' comprehensive work covers education in Canada from 1604 to 1957. His major importance is the provision of a definitive history of Canadian education. Phillips (1957: 408) gives "brief expositions of the thinking of European and American educators whose influence was felt in Canada" and emphasizes either "the views of Canadian educators or . . . changes in classroom practice which reflected the ideas from abroad or showed similar originality."

In their introduction, Patterson, Chalmers, and Friesen (1974)

observe that "the rapidly expanding body of published literature dealing with the history of Canadian education has not yet included a sourcebook dealing with significant people, their ideas on and their contributions to educational development" and that, consequently, "failure to attempt to fill this void is no longer justifiable." This observation is followed by the biographies, thoughts, and contributions of twenty-three Canadian educators, beginning with Mother Marguerite Bourgeoys, who lived from 1620 to 1700, and ending with M.E. LaZerte, who was still alive at the time of writing, and John G. Althouse, who died in 1956.

Sheffield (1974) addressed himself to the identification of excellent university teachers by surveying more than a thousand students who had graduated from nineteen Canadian universities in 1958, 1963, and 1968. The top twenty-three professors named by the graduates were contacted by Sheffield and asked to write "a personal expression of what you believe about teaching undergraduates, and how you go about it" (1974: xii). These expressions, along with biographical sketches of each professor, constitute the major part of the work and provide valuable insight into the thoughts and practices of Canadian educators. Sheffield, by seeking the views of university teachers actively engaged in teaching at the time and by publishing those views as they were expressed by the professors, points to a new focus in educational investigation.

Eleven Alberta Studies of Education and Educators

The literature about education in Alberta related to the present study falls generally into the major categories of the historical survey and the biographical study which focuses upon an individual. Chalmers

(1967, 1968), Opryshko (1967), Fowlie (1969), and Whitney, Repp, and Creelman (1967?) use a predominantly historical approach. Chalmers (1967) provides a definitive history of education in the province; Chalmers' (1968) is the official history of The Alberta Teachers' Association; Opryshko, Fowlie, and Whitney, Repp, and Creelman are histories of a particular county or school district; and all devote some attention to anecdote, biography, and reminiscence. Selinger (1960), Patterson (1961), Marzolf (1961), Walker (1969), B.C. Oviatt (1971), P.E. Oviatt (1970), and Myrehaug (1972) all investigate the lives of a single significant figure in Alberta education. Selinger (1960: 96) recommends that not only the "contributions of such men as the late Senator J.A. Calder" but also the "contributions of classroom teachers who have had outstanding careers" should be studied. Selinger (1960: 96) further notes that investigations should not be "confined only to those whose careers have been ended by death, but should also be directed to the careers of those who are still active."

The Historical Approach in Alberta Studies

Chalmers (1967) has amassed an exhaustive amount of information about education in Alberta from as early as 1842 up to 1965. Included are the effects on education of the influx of settlers from eastern Canada and of immigrants from other countries; the effects on teachers and schools of World War I, the Depression, and World War II; vocational education; education for the handicapped and the Indians; separate schools; educational financing; inspectors and superintendents; and the organizations concerned with education. This comprehensive investigation

of the major educational developments and issues in Alberta and the recurrent motif of the relationship of politics and education form a valuable matrix for understanding the influences upon educational thinking and practice in the province.

Chalmers (1968) is concerned specifically with the founders and the struggles of The Alberta Teachers' Association from its inception in 1917 as the Alberta Teachers' Alliance. Most instructive for purposes of this study are the detailed accounts of luminaries in Alberta education: John Walker Barnett, H.C. Newland, H.D. Ainlay, M.E. LaZerte, and Marian Gimby. Chalmers is particularly successful in capturing the vitality of these early educators.

Opryshko (1967), Fowlie (1969), and Whitney, Repp, and Creelman (1967?) provide a wealth of information about pioneers, schools, teachers, students, school boards, inspectors, and superintendents. These three enterprising compilations of the histories of a county or school district are particularly interesting, not only in their accounts of early education in Alberta, but in terms of how the larger political, economic, and educational movements affected individual schools and districts. Also of interest are the commemoration and the reminiscences of the large number of classroom teachers who did not necessarily achieve fame except in the eyes of their students and communities.

The Biographical Approach in Alberta Studies

The accounts of D.J. Goggin by Selinger (1960) and F.W.G. Haultain by Patterson (1961) provide valuable information about the influence of Goggin and Haultain upon the course of education as Alberta

struggled to gain provincial status. Both studies are explicit about the eastern Canadian influence which the two men exerted upon western Canadian education. Goggin's dual role as Superintendent of Education and Director of the Normal Schools in the Territories afforded him the distinction of being an educator who was paid more than Premier Haultain. Selinger explains Goggin's contribution in the development of normal schools and refers to his outspoken views on education, especially his disapproval of external examinations and his dissatisfaction with the penmanship of normal-school students. Haultain, the man who had appointed Goggin the chief educational officer of the Territories, and Goggin are also remembered for the antagonism they aroused in Roman Catholics by advocating secularized education, a specifically eastern Canadian influence.

Marzolf (1961) provides a definitive account of Alexander Cameron Rutherford's life, his career, and his educational and political views. Rutherford, the first Premier of Alberta and the first Minister of Education, emerges from Marzolf's study as a less than politically astute premier but as a remarkably benevolent leader in education. Rutherford's chief contributions included the founding of The University of Alberta, the organization and building of Galician schools, and the distribution of free readers for elementary school children.

In his examination of the life and views of John Walker Barnett, Walker (1969) provides detailed information about Barnett's pursuit of the goal of professionalism for all teachers in Alberta, an aim which resulted in the creation of The Alberta Teachers' Association. Walker devotes considerable attention to Barnett's experience with the British

movement in teacher unionization and organization. Walker also mentions Barnett's interest in increased federal financing of education, six-year university preparation of teachers in a combined arts and education program, and increased teacher control of curriculum.

P.E. Oviatt (1970) provides a biography of Hubert Charles Newland whose chief contributions to Alberta education included leadership in The Alberta Teachers' Alliance, his creation of The Education Society of Edmonton, and the influence of his progressivism upon Alberta curriculum in the development of the enterprise program.

B.C. Oviatt (1971) investigates the influence of William Aberhart as Minister of Education in Alberta. Aberhart's political control of the province in his capacity as premier and leader of an overwhelmingly popular movement and his own background as a teacher and principal combined to make his era fortuitous for education. His chief contributions were in the enactment of legislation which changed the nature of education in the province. Aberhart's legislation affected schools, The Alberta Teachers' Association, The Faculty of Education, and the social status of teachers.

The biography of Milton Ezra LaZerte, by Myrehaug (1972), is a clear explication of the contributions made by LaZerte in the field of teacher training. Included in the study is a detailed account of LaZerte's leadership as The School of Education evolved to become The Faculty of Education.

The review of representative historical and biographical studies in Alberta education has been included to indicate the nature of the work which has already been done and establishes the value of and

interest in the history of Alberta education as well as in the accounts of important educators.

Two New Approaches in Alberta Studies

Coutts and Walker (1964) and very recently McIntosh and Bryce (1977) have departed from the established historical-biographical approach. Each pair of investigators chose an educator who was still living, recorded the words of the educator, and concentrated solely upon information provided by the educator rather than relying upon documentary evidence. The investigators acted as editors. The two published accounts render as closely as possible the recorded conversation of the educator. Both studies include biographical and historical information. They are included in the review to indicate that a precedent has been set for research in which the investigator solicits information from an educator by means of questions and conversation, records it, and then acts as an editor to organize and present the information in a written form which closely adheres to the recorded discourse.

Coutts and Walker (1964: x), "convinced that the life and personality of G. Fred McNally must be preserved," present McNally's autobiography as it was told by him in a series of taped interviews. The account of the man who was Aberhart's Deputy-Minister of Education relates, frequently with considerable charm and humour, the motivations, beliefs, and efforts of a teacher who became one of Alberta's leading educators. The portrait which emerges is of a high-ranking civil servant who took pride in his position as Deputy-Minister and, later, as Chancellor of the University, as well as of a man who had strong religious views.

An interesting companion study to the life of McNally is provided by the conversations of Dr. T.C. Byrne whose rise to power in the civil service parallels McNally's. McIntosh and Bryce (1977) recorded Byrne as he talked about his life and about education in Alberta. The published conversations, reported informally and in the form of dialogue, begin with Byrne's childhood in Waskatenau where his father had a homestead. Byrne tells of his work in education as a teacher in rural and urban schools, superintendent, high school inspector, Chief Superintendent of Schools, Deputy-Minister of Education, and President of Athabasca University. Included, as well, are Byrne's views about issues, institutions, and people in Alberta education. Byrne expresses himself vigourously and with a candour which does not exclude himself as a target.

Of interest is the important new information Byrne is able to provide about Alberta educators, especially Hubert C. Newland. Byrne (McIntosh and Bryce, 1977: 97) is self-revelatory in his impressions of Newland.

> Newland, to me, personified intellectualism and freedom of thought. He was a socialist, a critic of educational traditionalism, an espoused progressivist, an avowed democratic thinker--a man of great intellectual capacity. He was very much interested in social justice. All of these things fitted the type of man I could admire.

McIntosh and Bryce have produced a major contribution in their study of a man whose humour and integrity are manifest and whose knowledge of education in the province is immense.

The sampling of the literature indicates that there is a substantial tradition of historical and biographical investigation which has been established in the study of teaching and of teachers. The tradition has its roots in time, providing a continuity and a context

for contemporary teachers as well as a pattern for Canadian and Alberta educational investigation. The review has quoted Selinger's recommendations about the need for research concerning outstanding teachers who are still living. By referring to three other studies, Sheffield (1974), Coutts and Walker (1964), and McIntosh and Bryce (1977), the review has attempted to show that, in addition to the conventional historical and biographical research, a precedent for new approaches has been set. The present study was advanced, like the historical surveys and biographies, to provide new information and inspiration; as well, it was advanced, like the studies of Sheffield, Coutts and Walker, and McIntosh and Bryce, to provide that information and inspiration to a large extent through the words of educators themselves.

PLANS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY OF THREE ALBERTA TEACHERS

Collecting the Information

Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton were approached by a letter (see Appendix A) which requested their co-operation in the study; they willingly consented to be involved. The letter explained the nature of the study and that involvement in it would entail a personal interview at a later time.

A set of interview questions to elicit information from the three educators about their experiences, perceptions, and speculations was prepared according to six major headings. After submission to an outside authority, Dr. T.O. Maguire of The University of Alberta Educational Research Services, the questions were revised (see Appendix B) according to his critical appraisal of them.

The questions, along with a covering letter (see Appendix A) were then sent to Rieger and Buxton prior to the interview. Lynass responded by telephone, and instructions to her were verbal. The letter explained that the specific questions under each of the main headings were open ended, their function being to provide direction and to stimulate discussion. In view of the number of specific questions, it was made clear that it was unreasonable to expect detailed responses to each and that the major headings were to be regarded as most important. As a consequence, no specific indication was given about time required for the interview: it was assumed that the length of time each individual was prepared to spend could be left to his discretion. The three educators were given the option of providing material in written form at any time during the course of the study. At this time, it was indicated that each would have the opportunity of reading the rough draft.

Arrangements were made subsequently by telephone and by letter to establish times for the interviews. Rieger sent a taped autobiography, dated February 22, 1977, in advance of the first interview. At the same time, Rieger sent two articles he had written. One was a copy of an address he gave in Barrhead, "Barrhead Local Education Week," (Rieger, 1964); the other was a copy of his report to the Annual General Meeting of The Alberta Teacher's Association. This latter document, "President's Report," was later published in The ATA Magazine (Rieger, 1964: 7-10).

The interviews with Rieger were taped at his home at 11704 - 41 Avenue, in Edmonton, on March 2 and 9, 1977. The interviews with Lynass were taped at her home at 11507 - 80 Avenue, in Edmonton, on the following days: March 16, 23, and 29; April 4 and 12, 1977. The interviews with

Buxton were taped at his office in The Faculty of Education on The University of Alberta campus in Edmonton, on April 18, 20, and 21, 1977.

The tapes provide a total of approximately eighteen and one-half hours of recorded discussion: five hours and fifteen minutes with Buxton; six and one-half hours with Rieger; and six hours and forty-five minutes with Lynass.

The subsequent transcription of the taped interviews yielded two hundred and sixty-six pages, typed and double spaced. Buxton's total was one hundred and seven pages, Lynass' ninety-two, and Rieger's sixty-seven. No conclusions should be drawn from these technical details since no account has been taken of such matters as repetition, pauses, or preference of economy in expression.

The tapes (with the exception of Rieger's autobiographical tape which was returned to him) and all of the transcriptions are stored at 9503 - 52 Street, in Edmonton.

Organizing the Information

The information obtained by transcribing the taped interviews with the three educators was edited and organized according to four major categories: information about the past, including biographical information about the three educators; information about important Alberta educators; information about current issues in Alberta education; and information about the ideal as well as the future in education. Prior to the interviews and before all of the information was assembled, the tentative procedure had been to follow the organization provided by the main headings according to which the interview questions had been grouped and to devote one chapter to each educator, unless a better

format evolved from the material itself. The information tended to fall into these major categories, but the amount devoted to important educators seemed to warrant a major section. Also, the biographical detail was interwoven with the historical events and issues since there seemed to be a close relationship between the two. The material about the ideal and the future was also combined because of the interrelatedness of the two. Some of the specific questions failed to elicit interest or sufficient response to be included. A preliminary draft was prepared and given to each of the three educators for revision before preparation of a final draft.

Since the amount of material which was obtained from the interviews with Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton was extensive and required severe editing, the choice of the information to be included in the study was subjective. As Koestler (1975: 233) states:

> But the collecting of data is a discriminating activity, like the picking of flowers, and unlike the action of a lawn-mower; and the selection of flowers considered worth picking, as well as their arrangement into a bouquet, are ultimately matters of personal taste.

Three techniques, however, were employed to mitigate the effects of subjectivity to some degree. The first was the opportunity that each of the three educators had to read the preliminary draft and to make changes. The second was that, wherever possible, the words of the educators were changed as little as possible. The third was the use of extensive quotation to minimize the possibility of distortion of ideas and to avoid misrepresentation. As a result of these techniques, the reader has been given some assurance of material which is as faithful as possible to its sources and the opportunity to check his impressions by referring to the liberal quotations in the chapters which follow.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter I establishes the background, nature, and importance of the study of three Alberta teachers. It introduces each of the three teachers, Lynass, Rieger, and Buxton. A review of literature in education pertinent to the study is included. Chapter I includes the plans and procedures and provides an outline of Chapters I to VI.

Chapter II presents an historical outline as a minimal framework within which are set the reminiscences and thoughts of Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton about significant episodes and influences in their lives as well as in Alberta education. Biographical details have been arranged chronologically and interwoven with the major historical and educational events as these are perceived by Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton. The chapter begins in the early nineteen hundreds with the childhood memories of the three educators and concludes in the urban, technological society of the nineteen sixties. Chapter II is designed to provide an account of the personal and professional lives of the three educators and a capsule history of education in the province from their perspective and experiences. The central theme throughout the chapter is one of change.

Chapter III is devoted to the Alberta educators whose ideas and energies have influenced and contributed to Alberta education between the years from 1920 to 1945. The emphasis in this chapter is upon the information Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton are able to provide about those leaders whom they encountered as impressive colleagues. Included, as well, are the assessments made by Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton of the aims and efforts of these men and women dedicated to the improvement of education in the province. While the focus is upon the anecdotes and

perceptions of Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton, an attempt has been made to group the quoted material according to the political educators involved with the large unit of administration, the educators who worked toward progressivism and professionalism, educators within The University of Alberta, and educators outside the University. The organizing theme is that of vision and accomplishment.

Chapter IV concerns itself with the examination of the issues and problems which arise from the relationships between Alberta society and its schools in the nineteen seventies. A minimal philosophical framework has been advanced to establish a perspective for the analyses of the current state of education according to Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton. The predominant theme is one of complexity and concern about society and its schools.

Chapter V devotes a major section to each of the three teachers. Within that section each teacher offers statements of his vision of education, purposes and ideals in education, changes which would improve education, and projections of the future. Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass look to the past for examples and illustrations of the ideal and see some obstacles in the present which act against improvement. The theme of Chapter V is one of faith in progress and considered optimism predicated upon conviction.

Chapter VI provides conclusions based upon the memories, experiences, reflections, and thoughts of Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton about education and educational figures of prominence in the past, issues in the present, the aspiration to perfection, and the potential of the future. Included are recommendations for further study which could emanate from the present study.

CHAPTER II

REFLECTIONS OF CHANGE IN THE SCHOOLS OF ALBERTA

INTRODUCTION

Two hundred and twenty-three years ago, "on a sunny September 11 in 1754, near the modern village of Chauvin, the first white man strode into Alberta" (MacGregor, 1972: 25). Anthony Henday's coming marks the official beginning of a plains civilization our knowledge of which dates back eleven thousand years to an unknown hunter who, when most of Alberta lay locked beneath the ice, killed a buffalo near what is now Taber (MacGregor: 13-14). The hunter's act is singularly appropriate since it is representative of the long centuries when nomadic peoples lived upon the land. But Henday's arrival also signals the beginning of the history of the white man in Alberta and heralds the development of his educational system.

After Henday came explorers, expeditions, fur traders, posts, mounted police, missionaries, surveyors, and settlers. The Dominion Lands Act, the land treaties, survey pegs, and railroad tracks opened the west for white settlement on a large scale. As the settlers came in ever-increasing numbers from old and new worlds, they not only brought values with them but they also rapidly coalesced into a rural society; and both the values which they brought and the kinds of communities they established helped to determine the nature of education in Alberta.

Political developments as Alberta moved from the federalist aegis of territorial government to provincial status had major implications for education as Albertans assumed autonomy in school matters. The independence which early Albertans displayed in their espousal of provincial status found equally passionate reflection in the proliferation of one-room schools as well as in the founding of both a normal school and a university for a population of less than 400,000. Later events in the course of Alberta's own particular historical development as well as the impact of the external world of the twentieth century, with its hallmarks of global struggle, political and economic movements, increasing technology, and social change, have influenced education in significant ways.

The historical influences and issues in Alberta education emerge in a fresh way as Earl Buxton, Agnes Lynass, and Thomas Rieger contribute their recollections, experiences, and musings. Their reminiscences form a capsule history of education in the province from the early years of 1900 to the present and show how historical, political, and economic events affected and continue to affect communities, schools, and individuals. The range of experience of these three educators is vast. As children, they participated in family and community life and were students in the schools of Alberta. They lived through the momentous years of the Depression, of Social Credit, and of World War Two; they now take part in a wealthy technological society. All three were students in normal school and university; each was engaged in a subsequent struggle for and commitment to further education; and each taught in the rural schools of the thirties. At least one, and frequently all three,

have been involved in or directly affected by the following major changes in education: the centralization movement; the evolution of The Alberta Teachers' Association; the creation of the faculties of education; and the long battle for professionalism and for legislation to achieve economic parity for teachers and educational opportunity for all Albertans.

The story of their lives and times really begins with their parents who were among the influx of settlers between 1906 and the beginning of the First World War. Starting with their parents is important not only in revealing the influences upon the three educators but also in emphasizing how dramatically Alberta has changed in less than a century. As the story progresses, it provides a picture of life in early Alberta and traces the major historical developments from the perspective of their impact upon education in the province from that time to the present. From their accounts, however, also emerges an intimate portrait of three human beings who fell into education by accident and who then chose to become teachers.

THE EARLY YEARS

Parents and Other Early Influences

In 1909, Alberta had been a province for four years under the Liberal premiership of A.C. Rutherford; The Calgary Normal School had been open for three years; The University of Alberta had been born in 1907 and had opened its doors in 1908; the population of Alberta, mostly rural, was climbing toward 374,000 (MacGregor, 1972: 196); and homesteaders were complying with the regulations of The Dominion Lands Act first formulated thirty-seven years previously. In that same year,

Thomas F. Rieger's parents came to Alberta.

> In 1909, my mother came from England and my father from Germany by way of England. My father was a tailor and carried on this trade in Calgary for a couple of years. Then, like so many people of that time, he went on a great homesteading adventure. He took out a homestead near Michichi, about a hundred miles east of Calgary. By 1914, he had completed the requirements for "proving-up," as they said, the homestead so that he had title to it (Rieger: 22 February, 1977). "Proving-up" meant that within a period of three years the homesteader had broken so many acres, put up so much fencing, and built some kind of habitable building on the hundred and sixty acres which constituted the homestead. The homesteader also had to live on the homestead at least six months out of every year, which ruled out speculation. The one hundred and sixty acres cost nothing except for a registration fee of ten dollars. The homesteader could get another hundred and sixty acres, called a pre-emption, usually adjacent or close by. This cost a little bit, but the same conditions held so that most homesteaders ended up with a half-section (Rieger: 2 March, 1977). While my father was "proving-up," he had also been working during the winters in Calgary. In 1914, the family moved to Delia, a town a little farther east of Michichi, where he set up a tailoring business which he carried on there for the next forty-one years (Rieger: 22 February, 1977).

Earl Buxton's parents, both born in Ontario, came west also to participate in the great homesteading adventure. After a bad year in Saskatchewan, they moved to Alberta, first to Edmonton in 1913 and then to Lougheed in 1919 when Buxton, who had been born in Toronto, was nine years old. Like so many of the early Albertans, his parents showed interest in the intellectual betterment of their children. Buxton considers their influence in his personal and professional life to be significant.

During my boyhood, we were far from wealthy. My mother and Dad had five youngsters, but they made every effort to see that all of us got the best education that we could possibly get. Dad had trained as a machinist, but he was running a garage and implement business in Lougheed. Although we were never very wealthy, they did emphasize that we needed to get as much education as possible. Dad and I used to work on cars and come home greasy and use Snap to take the grease off. He'd say, "Son, you want to be sure that you don't get into this kind of business. Get into something where you can use your head and not get grease on your hands."

I remember when I was about twelve, Dad bought The Books of Knowledge. They just opened new doors to me. He didn't have too much money, but he bought them. They were rather tremendous: I used to sit and read The Book of Famous Deeds, The Book of Poetry, and Things to Make and Things to Do. I read those twenty Books of Knowledge from cover to cover, which opened a new world to me (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Agnes Lynass also acknowledges the influence of her parents who had come to Alberta from Scotland. She remembers both humour and educated conversation.

My parents were solidly Scottish, my father from the Highlands and my mother Lowland Scottish, my father strictly highly educated, moneyed class and my mother a good Scotch Presbyterian who believed that work was the salvation of humanity. My father read widely. He was schooled in Greek and Latin. Mr. Simpson, a neighbour, had been a teacher at the university in Pocatello, Idaho. Mr. Bathgate, whose brother had been principal of The Glasgow University, was another neighbour. Those three men sitting around talking together was an education for anyone who wished to listen. My mother, with her ability to sing and to laugh in the face of disaster, be happy at any time, was in direct contrast. In her own way she was a wonderful woman. My sister, one of my brothers, and I were very close. I felt secure and well liked within that unit (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Communities, Schools, and Activities

These three accounts give some idea of the different kinds of people who came to Alberta; for the province drew its settlers from all classes and from many parts of the world, mainly from England, Scotland, the United States, Central Europe, and Scandinavia, as well as from other parts of Canada. These were the people who constituted the small communities in which their children grew up and went to school, and many of their children later became teachers. The Indians, a century and a half after Henday, were invisible, largely forgotten except for mission and residential schools (Chalmers, 1967: 261-265). Rieger comments on the community in which he grew up.

> Tolerance of other people seems to be quite a problem in Alberta now, which is something I can't remember as a boy. In the village where I grew up, everyone had come from some other country or at least from some other province. There were no blacks. There were some Orientals who operated a Chinese restaurant and laundry, but they had no women or children. I never saw any Indians until I was about thirty-five. I knew there were some in Alberta, but they weren't a cause of concern (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Lynass remembers her community, which included a German, a Negro, and a Jew, as being civilized and largely free of prejudice.

> I think that that whole area west of Red Deer is civilized and has been from the very beginning. During the War, my brother was killed; and the first person over to talk to my mother was a German; a Mr. Ruskowski. He came to weep with my mother. My brother had been such a nuisance to that man that he finally came to love him as his own son. He had a beautiful big barn. The first thing my brother did when he

went to visit Mr. Ruskowski was to climb to the top of it. Mr. Ruskowski almost had heart failure because it was so high off the ground, and Jim couldn't have been more than about four and a half feet tall at the time. Mr. Ruskowski stood there, swearing at him in German to come down. When he got down, he clasped him in his arms and called him a brave boy.

We knew neither prejudice nor insult in our community. Mr. Martin was a Negro blacksmith. I called him Mr. Martin, but my father called him by his first name. He used to come out to our farm and work there a whole day, repairing things because it was easier for him to come and repair them than for everything to be hauled into town. I sat on his knee as I did on Mr. Richman's knee because I was a cute little girl and they picked me up. No one ever pointed out to me that Negroes were different. I didn't realize that the Jews were a nation until Hitler and Warsaw. I didn't realize that you were supposed to discriminate against Jews.

Interestingly enough, the single instance of discrimination which Lynass recalls occurred at school when her teacher took exception to a boy whose colloquially colourful speech and personal cleanliness did not match pedagogical expectations. She is careful to point out that the teacher's actions were not met with approval in her home.

There was a boy in town I went to school with whose father was a widower. This boy wasn't always clean when he came to school. The teacher didn't seem to like him as well as she did the rest of the class. One day she asked him what milk was. He said, "Processed grass." She gave him the strap. In physiology and hygiene lesson, the teacher asked what we were made up of. He said, "Tubes and guts." Again he got the strap. When we all told it at home, my father insisted that that was the best answer a child could give. That's the only boy I can think of who was discriminated against (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Rieger, who grew up in Delia, a Southern Alberta community of three hundred people, remembers beginning school, watching his father and the blacksmith at work, and engaging in the typical activities for children at the time. He found school pleasant if uninspiring.

> My first clear recollection is starting school in 1918. I can remember watching my father at work. Across the road from where we lived in the village was a blacksmith. I was fascinated by the work he did; and I have always had a bit of envy for people who could take cloth, leather, or iron and make something useful or decorative out of it.
>
> At the skating-rink, where we spent every possible minute that we could, I learned to skate and to play hockey. In summer, the main activity was baseball. There was no regular movie theatre, but there was an occasional show. There was a swimming hole, about a mile out of town. I recall that both my parents were great readers. There were always books and other reading material in the house; and, especially in the winter, the whole family would be reading or doing their home-work.
>
> There were two classrooms in the school in 1918 and six when I finished in 1928. I can't remember any very unpleasant incidents at school; neither can I remember any inspiration that I had during my school years to become a teacher. I probably remember most of the teachers; and while I am not wildly enthusiastic about them, I can remember three of them who gave direction to my life. In those times, there were departmental examinations from grade eight up; and I have a document called a Public School Leaving Diploma, granted by The Department of Education for passing the grade eight examinations in 1925. Grade nine, then, was the beginning of high school. We only had three grades in high school in Delia, that is, up to grade eleven (Rieger: 22 February, 1977).

Buxton grew up in Lougheed, a community of two hundred and fifty people. He was impressed by a druggist and a high-school teacher, both of whom he regards as having been influential in his career. He also remembers enjoying and memorizing poetry in high school.

> Walter Bamforth took over the drugstore in Lougheed and opened a lending library at the back. He would charge a dollar to join and five cents for each book you took out. At that time, back in the twenties, books weren't that plentiful in the schools, in the society, or in the homes. Well, here was this great library of books. I went through James Oliver Curwood, Zane Gray, and Edgar Rice Burroughs and all the Tarzan books--not the most intellectual reading--but at least I read and read. I think that this had an influence on my later life.
>
> I remember, as well, that I used to enjoy poetry in high school. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "The Italian in England," and "The Ballad of East and West," for example, I found quite enjoyable. I had a large piece of Whittier's "Snow Bound" memorized.
>
> D.S.A. Kyle was my principal at Lougheed, and later he was principal of The Lethbridge Collegiate. A big man, rather pleasant, he was a good disciplinarian. He taught me grade eight, nine, ten, and eleven. He had the four grades with about half a dozen students in each, which wasn't a heavy load; but he had to cover all the subjects for all of those grades. He left me largely on my own. I think he had to. We were doing Mowat's History of England and Canada, a great thick book. He would say, "Would you read [illegible] and out what you can about Walpole for next day." Then [illegible] write down what you've learned, with the book [illegible] I wrote and I wrote. I think that kind of experience [illegible]
>
> There had been no chemistry lab when I went to the school, but Kyle made certain that he got equipment so that we could have a lab in Chemistry 1. He, too, set up a lending library

> in his office which, like the one that Walter Bamforth had in the drugstore, was valuable to me: I liked to read. Kyle also provided a gymnasium in the basement of the school where I became acquainted with tumbling, apparatus work, and boxing. I have respect for Kyle, who had quite a complex job and who did it well. He was always good-natured, and we got along fine (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Born in Calgary right after the First World War, Agnes Lynass went to school in Delburne. She remembers learning how to work co-operatively with other students and independently of the teacher.

> Those teachers taught us something that is missing from the school today: how to work on our own; how to ask questions; and how to attack a problem at least a dozen ways because, God knows, we never knew the right way when we started. I also learned from my high-school teacher, Mr. Kelly, absolute tolerance for those who are trying hard. He would let the four of us work on the blackboard together and argue. He would never interfere but would go right on teaching his other classes. Of course, we were only in school on sufferance because there was no provision for grade twelve in our school. Grade eleven was the limit, and the four of us were in grade twelve on our own. When school was over, if we had any questions, he would work right along with us. If we learned nothing else from him, we learned the tremendous human resource there is within each one of us and that an idea is valueless unless we share it (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Lynass also gives a detailed and eloquent account of community life in the thirties as she was growing up. She tells of parochial accomplishment and naïveté.

> People today have no concept of what we were like in the thirties. I can speak only for the small towns and the rural communities. We knew our school texts extremely well. We

> had to sort out the associations we made with our fellow students in the community and the values we were taught at home. We were parochial. Remember that Edmonton itself had about 80,000 people. Our school had, at a maximum, a hundred and twenty-five; and we were considered a very good school. We were a district full of well-educated people; and yet we were so naïve, so inexperienced in some facets, despite which we still sent athletes to The British Empire Games--and one of the Chief Justices of Alberta went through our schools. There are quite a number of very successful people who went through these same little rural schools. I'd hate to leave the idea when I say we were naïve that we were country rubes. In our community, there were people who read Latin and Greek and people who had music training. But on a whole, we were parochial; and the Depression added to that. Our wants were few and fortunately so. If we'd wanted much, we'd have been out of luck (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Lynass remembers the chautauquas (originally an odd experimental project in adult education through dramatic pedagogy developed in Chautauqua, New York, in the late eighteen hundreds and imported to Alberta, perhaps by a group such as The Women's Institute).

> The chautauqua was a travelling variety show. It had all aspects of culture, some of which wasn't as good as the culture in the community; but when I heard a group of Negro singers at a chautauqua, I finally understood the reference in Coleridge's poem to "Around, around, flew each sweet sound." It was those Negro spiritualists harmonizing. There were health talks and there were travelogues and there were magicians to do tricks and there were people from far-away places (at least, the advertisement said so) and then there was local talent from Calgary or Edmonton. It was all a way of introducing variety into an otherwise restricted cultural situation (Lynass: 4 April, 1977).

Pride in co-operative endeavour and community involvement form twin themes in Lynass' account of school fairs.

> The provincial government were actively involved in trying to improve the involvement of young people in the farms, so every spring they'd come out and give the school children seeds to plant. In the fall, there'd be a school fair. There'd be judges from The Agriculture School at Olds, sometimes someone from The Department of Education. Many students would plant a garden, and others would rear calves and pigs and train horses in order to exhibit them at the fair. For the girls, there were sewing, knitting, fancy work, and quilting. For the boys, there were all types of grains. Usually, the boys took care of the animals; but the girls were admitted in the same class, one place where there seemed to be no sexism in education. The parents took an active part.
>
> Some time in late September or early October, there would be a community picnic which would start early in the morning; and people would bring their lunches. There would be handmade quilts, crocheted doilies, embroidered table covers, hem-stitching, and clothes that had been designed and made by the student, all products of young people working closely with their parents or someone else in the community. The student who got the highest number of points got a scholarship to The Agriculture School at Olds where they could take part in some elementary, scientific agriculture. It was a high light of the school year not only for its community association but for the pride in being the best in something that you had worked on by yourself. A student could earn as much as twenty dollars, which, in those days, was a vast sum (Lynass: 4 April, 1977).

Sports days, like the school fairs, were important events which gave members of the teams a chance to travel and to represent their community by competing in other centres in the area. Again, Lynass refers to the way in which parents and adults were involved.

It's hard to do justice to the sports day. There was a sports day at Stettler that took in pretty well the area of central Alberta from north of Calgary to just south of Edmonton. Ponoka took part, as did Olds, Didsbury, and Drumheller. There was another sports day at Red Deer, one at Drumheller, and one at Trochu. We entered all four. Our basketball team one time beat the Gradettes at Stettler, and not one of us will ever forget it. We came to The Edmonton Exhibition to play in the provincial contest for basketball after our own sports day.

It would all start on the summer evenings after the crops were in. We'd gather in the school yard at least once a week and much more frequently once the farm work lessened. Everybody played baseball till it began to get dark; then the four basketball courts would be occupied. The young men and women who were out of school would play right along with those who were in school. The parents who didn't play would be on the benches keeping score, cheering, or just having what they called a "chin wag." (I don't know where the word came from, but it was certainly used in our community: they'd say, "I had a good old chin wag.") It all went into a community understanding, a community appreciation, and forgiveness of all of us. I never felt hesitant about playing on any of those teams (Lynass: 4 April, 1977).

Christmas concerts, like the school fairs and the sports days, offered not only pleasant diversion for the rural community but also, more importantly according to Lynass, gave an opportunity for a rehearsal of talent in an atmosphere of warmth and solidarity.

The Christmas concert was part of every rural school. People came from miles around, as far as twenty, using a sleigh and horses, to spend two hours listening to the students sing, produce plays, recite, and do gymnastic dancing. There were some rather skilled people: a pianist who went on to make her

living as a pianist and one or two singers who joined church choirs in Edmonton, Calgary, Montreal, when they left Delburne. I agree with Gray in his "Elegy in a Country Church-Yard," where he says, "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen"; but the talented didn't waste their fragrance in our community. They were appreciated and we were all better for having had them as ours. I always look back to those school fairs, sports days, and the Christmas concerts as making room for the average to just a little above average with a sense of appreciation that we were all part of a friendly atmosphere (Lynass: 4 April, 1977).

Lynass concludes her account of Delburne and its activities by referring to the impact of radio upon the imagination. The radio, like the other events, provided entertainment as well as a focus of participation for school and community, for young and old.

> Then, of course, there was the listening to the radio. We knew what was in Fibber McGee and Molly's cupboard because we had one at home. We liked Cecil B. De Mille's plays. To this day, I have never seen an actor on the screen who approached the actors in my imagination when I was about eleven or twelve. Douglas Fairbanks, Junior, was not nearly as good in reality as he was on the radio. It made room for us to create the character. We heard the voice, and we put the sinews on that voice. We co-operated in those radio plays. These activities, the chautauquas, school fairs, the sports days, the Christmas concerts, and listening to the radio, were a part of rural living, rural learning, and rural teaching, limited in one respect but in others thoroughly fascinating (Lynass: 4 April, 1977).

In the communities of Delia, Lougheed, and Delburne, similar to many such communities at the time, Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass grew up and went to school in the twenties and early thirties. These were

communities with blacksmiths and swimming holes, communities in which books and educational opportunities were valued but limited, communities in which chautauquas, school fairs, sports days, Christmas concerts, and radio were important cultural events, communities in which occupational opportunities were limited or unattractive for those few who graduated from high school.

Leaving the Community

Formal education for many Albertans in the twenties and thirties ended with the grade eight departmental examination. Rieger says, "In 1925, while the Public School Leaving Diploma was the object of most people, a great many of them didn't get one for various reasons" (Rieger: 9 March, 1977). Lynass, in the same vein, comments that "most students didn't go beyond grade nine" (Lynass: 23 March, 1977). In 1925, according to Chalmers (1967: 75), the number of students in grades nine to twelve comprised 9.96 percent of the total school population. He outlines some of the possible reasons: the population was a generally youthful one; many parents and children, while valuing education to a certain point, did not carry academic aspirations to extremes; there were relatively few high schools, and most of them were in the cities and towns; private schools were virtually non-existent as well as unpopular; and the high schools that were accessible emphasized teacher training, university preparation, and academic studies punctuated by rigid and frequent departmental examinations (Chalmers, 1967: 185-190). Lynass corroborates Chalmers' observations.

> We had been educated according to the Alberta curriculum. We had been led on a particular path, along a route that led

> to matriculation. Whether we were intelligent or just average, we were educated the same; and that education was a form of force-feeding (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

For those whom the high schools did accommodate, the formal program frequently ended with grade eleven; consequently, further studies had to be pursued on one's own and outside the community.

For people such as Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass, who were a part of that small group graduating from high schools, the first decision was to leave the small community. Each of the three eventually went to normal school. For each of the three, the decision to go to normal school was, interestingly enough, not so much a matter of choice as of circumstances which combined to make the normal school look inviting.

Even beyond the boundaries of the small villages and towns, career opportunities outside of education, especially for women, were limited. The influx of settlers in the early years of the province, however, "together with the natural increase, led to an extremely rapid rise in the number of school pupils and to a corresponding increase in school districts, schools and classrooms" (Chalmers, 1967: 413). The need for teachers grew correspondingly: by 1912, there were two normal schools, one in Calgary and one in Camrose. The First World War added to the difficulties in staffing classrooms. "By November of 1919 it was apparent that a teacher shortage was imminent" (Chalmers, 1967: 415). Trying to find more teachers, The Department of Education "in 1920 . . . embarked on a loan policy for prospective teachers" (Chalmers, 1967: 415), which helped to make the normal schools attractive.

In 1929, the Great Depression occurred, its effects later exacerbated on the prairies by drought, grasshoppers, wind storms, and

hail. The Department of Education, however, was slow to change its loan policy. In 1930, it was still possible to borrow money from the Department. Ironically, perhaps the greatest impact of the Depression as it affected education generally (leaving aside the matter of poverty) was the resultant teacher surplus.

When Buxton and Rieger left their communities in 1928 and 1929, the Depression was still to come. For Lynass, a few years later, the Depression was only one obstacle among others which hampered her choice of a career.

For Earl Buxton, in 1928, The Department of Education loan offered a solution.

> I was living in Lougheed when I graduated from grade eleven which was as far as the school went there in 1927. I was still only sixteen, too young to go to normal; so I worked in a grocery store for a year at ten dollars per week. I enjoyed meeting the customers but didn't find the job too remunerative. I'd worked on stooking and bundle crews on the farms, and I didn't think that was too entrancing. There were no other opportunities available, so I decided to try teaching. At that time, the provincial government was giving a loan of four hundred dollars at eight percent interest. You could borrow so much a month from the government to finance your stay at normal, so this looked like a fair answer to my problem. I borrowed the four hundred dollars, went to Camrose Normal, and took a couple of years to pay it back after I got teaching at eight hundred dollars a year (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

In 1935, for Agnes Lynass, as for Buxton, normal school seemed reasonable.

> I grew up always wanting to be a doctor; but our community, although we never suffered during the Depression, also never saw much money. Teaching was one of the three jobs open to women that was readily accessible. I didn't want to be a nurse or a stenographer. I was a reasonably good student, I enjoyed learning, and I very much enjoyed my fellow students: I thought I could be a teacher without it being a fatal experience. I didn't expect that I was going to be a great teacher. I wasn't even sure I'd be a good teacher; but I felt that I could live with it, and people could live with me (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

After Rieger finished grade eleven, he worked for a year in The Canadian Bank of Commerce in Delia. In the fall of 1929, Rieger left to study chemistry at The University of Alberta. His impressions of the University, the laboratories, and his professors are interesting in the contrast between the University and the village school.

> I had heard in that little village about university, but I certainly didn't know what it was like (Rieger: 2 March, 1977). During my last year in high school, I became especially interested in chemistry (Rieger: 22 February, 1977). There were only five or six in our chemistry class. We had a tiny lab. When I went to university, the chemistry class seemed huge. Do you know the old Medical building? It has two amphitheatres. Our class was in one of those. Now, to a fellow who came from a rural place to see that many students, it seemed huge (Rieger: 2 March, 1977); and, of course, the labs were a real eye-opener to me (Rieger: 22 February, 1977). I can almost visualize it yet (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).
>
> There was an excellent lecturer in chemistry (Rieger: 22 February, 1977). Stover was his name. Sheldon, a professor of mathematics, also impressed me. He was an interesting person. He wasn't a teacher; that is, he had no teacher education. He had a knack of telling you just enough to keep

> you going but made you work it out yourself. Another professor I had who was very well known was a French professor, Eduard Sonet. A real character, he maintained his atrocious accent as long as he lived and was certainly an energetic teacher who used all kinds of incidental information about his experiences (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Rieger "would undoubtedly have continued in chemistry" (Rieger: 22 February, 1977) had he been able to continue at university; but Rieger's plan was lost in the Depression.

THE DEPRESSION YEARS

Background to the Depression

Although R.B. Bennett, an Albertan, headed the Conservative government of Canada, the province continued in its peculiarly western way. Shortly after gaining control of its natural resources and electing nine United Farmers of Alberta members federally (MacGregor, 1972: 261-262), Alberta turned from the Farmers to follow Aberhart. Viewing Bennett with suspicion, Albertans derisively named their horse-drawn automobiles Bennett-Buggies and their children's underwear, made of flour or sugar sacks, Bennett-Underwear.

Rieger comments on the impact of the Depression upon society and education in general terms.

> The Depression happened to so many people, almost everybody where I lived. We did feel quite bitter about it. The really bad thing about the Depression was the unemployment. There was neither unemployment insurance nor were there pensions, except for a few private companies, like the railways. There were no old-age pensions (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

> In the thirties, if a woman teacher got married, she had to quit her job right there. This was strictly for economic reasons. It was a general feeling of the public that with so many unemployed it wasn't fair to have a man and his wife both earning money (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Commenting on Bennett's insensitivity and his Buggies, Rieger is trenchant in his observations about Bennett and the helpless anger of people caught in the poverty of the Depression.

> R.B. Bennett, the head of a Conservative government from 1930 to 1935, was the victim of the Depression. He and his government didn't cause it; but they could do nothing about it, no more than could any other government anywhere in the western world. But naturally, one would blame the government; and, perhaps, they did deserve some blame, too, because they showed a complete insensitivity to people who were out of work. I can remember one remark Bennett made to the effect that anybody who was willing to work in Canada could get along well. To people who knew the realities, who were willing to work and had tried for years to find work, such a remark seemed ignorant and callous.
>
> Bennett-Buggies were old automobiles. People took the engines out of them, put on shafts, and put horses to pull them. They were very common because there were quite a few old cars about, but people couldn't run them. You couldn't get them repaired, you couldn't buy a license, you couldn't buy gasoline; but the farmers still had horses (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Rieger explains what the Depression meant to him, personally, and how it changed his plans.

> Whereas in 1928, when I finished high school in the little village Delia, I had been offered three different jobs without seeking them, two years later, after my first year at university, it was almost impossible to find a job of any kind. I did get

> a summer job at a sawmill in Spurfield, near Lesser Slave Lake. I think I was paid a dollar and a half a day. Anyway, at the end of the summer, I only had about seventy dollars. The consequence was that I had no money for university. Since my parents were just as much victims of this economic debacle as anybody else, I couldn't get help from them. However, it was still possible, in those days, to borrow money from The Department of Education in order to take a course at the normal school. I enrolled in The Calgary Normal School in the fall of 1930 and graduated in the spring of 1931 (Rieger: 22 February, 1977).

In this way, then, Rieger, as Buxton before him and Lynass later, entered the normal school. Buxton, later, was to graduate into the competitive market of the Depression. He would apply in writing to sixty-seven boards and interview many more before finding a position. Rieger, upon graduation, would not be so fortunate and would spend a year in which his total earnings were six dollars and fifty cents. Lynass, whose community had not been affected to the same degree by the Depression, was to be more fortunate in graduating later when the worst effects of the Depression were almost finished. According to MacGregor (1972: 271), "the fall of 1937 marked the end of the disaster years." However, all of this was still in the future for the three who, by various routes, became students in the normal schools of the province in 1928, 1931, and 1935.

Teacher Training: Background and Context for the Normal Schools

The history of teacher training and certification in the province is complex, involving normal schools, the evolution of the faculties of education, the roles of such people as Goggin, Aberhart, LaZerte, Barnett,

Newland, and The Department of Education. (Later, there was involvement of the junior colleges and of The Alberta School Trustees' Association.) Selinger (1960), Patterson (1961), Chalmers (1967), Chalmers (1968), Mann (1961), Myrehaug (1972), and Chalmers' book on LaZerte (Gladly Would He Teach: A Biography of Milton Ezra LaZerte), not yet published, all provide comprehensive, scholarly treatment of teacher training and certification.

Normal schools, one of Goggin's contributions to the western educational system, were responsible for all teacher training in the province from 1906 to 1930 when the first class of seven teachers graduated from LaZerte's School of Education. The School accepted baccalaureates; its graduates, after successfully completing an academic year at the School, were certified to teach grades seven to twelve. Meanwhile, the first-class certificates, obtainable by graduation from the normal schools, allowed their graduates to teach all grades from one to twelve; and the holder of the second-class certificate could teach grades one to eleven.

However, certification was and is a ministerial prerogative; hence, The Department of Education exerts some control over teacher training. The Department, especially during the teacher shortages resulting from both wars, has issued provisional certificates, permits, and letters of authority. Using Alexandrian efficiency in its approach to teacher training, it has shortened or waived teacher-training programs. As well, the Department has independently (from as early as 1913) and jointly with the University (from 1919 to 1944) offered summer-school courses for teachers. Although a paramount purpose of The Department of Education Summer School was the conversion of second-class to first-class

certificates, it also offered courses in agriculture, physical education, and enterprise (Chalmers, 1967: 423, 428).

In 1939, The School of Education became a College and LaZerte its Principal. Ultimately, in 1945, in an historic efflorescence of institutional co-operation and leadership, the normal schools underwent a transmogrification into The Faculty of Education. LaZerte, now Dean, moved from his College headquarters in a corner of St. Joseph's College (now Newman Centre) into the new Edmonton Normal School (now Corbett Hall) which had been completed in 1930 (Mann, 1961: 27-29). LaZerte brought to the Faculty his commitment to observation and practice teaching which had been a hallmark of the School.

With the founding of the Faculty, teacher training became the responsibility of the University. Henceforth, undergraduate programs and degrees in education became available. (The College had been given the right to grant the B.Ed. Degree, but it was a degree granted only after another degree.) An important group involved in the preparations for university teacher training was The Board of Teacher Education and Certification. Established in 1944 as a ministerial advisory body, the Board originally comprised representatives of The Alberta Teachers' Association, The University of Alberta, The Department of Education, and, subsequently the universities, junior colleges, and The Alberta School Trustees' Association. With the absorption of the normal-school instructors into the Faculty, normal schools ceased to exist.

Preparing to Teach: The Normal Schools of the Thirties

Normal schools have been viewed in a variety of ways from the times when early trustees felt that "there was a strange 'something' in the meaning of the word 'normal' that caused people to associate it immediately with a mental institution" (Charyk, 1971: 228). Lynass, Rieger, and Buxton are probably fairly representative of this variety, expressing moderately enthusiastic championship, philosophical detachment, and an active uncertainty.

Lynass is graphic as she reconstructs what it was like when she left her small community to face the strange and difficult new world of The Calgary Normal School.

> In normal school, the staff had to do a great deal more teaching than people generally accept; for example, they held dances for us. Most of us had grown up in a small community where we knew everyone. We were never without a date because in our community they just said, "We're going to the dance tonight. Anybody hasn't a ride?" And you were part of the group. At normal school, you were an individual; and the first dance you hardly knew anyone. It was the first time I recognized how shy I really was. I was so shy I couldn't talk to a strange boy because I'd never met a strange boy (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

In her re-creation of the programme which was an important aspect of the normal school curriculum, Lynass explains the kind of courage that was required in order to perform before a large assembly of strangers.

> They asked us to do some things that were terrifying. Every week there was a play or recitation, a programme, it was called. Each class had about forty minutes to entertain all the others--you know, two hundred people! I remember

being given a poem to recite. I don't recall the name of it, but it starts out

> They were coming across the prairie
> They were galloping hard and fast
> And the eyes of the restless cowboy
> Had sighted the game at last.

I got started off all right, but I panicked and raced through the last ten lines so that even I didn't know what I was saying. Miss Fisher just said, "My dear, my dear, you must not get nervous," as I ran off the stage. These programmes were a traumatic experience, although we didn't know the word. We had been perfectly at home acting before the forty or the twenty-four students we knew in high school; but in front of two hundred, that was an epic performance! And what's more, the audience at home you knew were as stupid as you. You didn't know anything about those people at normal school who were watching you, excepting that some of them had real talent. Some of them were tap-dancers, some were singers, and some sounded very, very clever when you listened to them (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

In reflecting upon the purpose of these programmes which called for such heroism, Lynass is forced to conclude that whatever her instructors believed, she later found the experience of having participated in the programmes invaluable when she had to organize Christmas concerts.

> I think the programmes were solely to prepare us for putting on the Christmas concerts and for working with the parent groups. I don't know what was the instructors' aim. In those days, I would never have asked that question of an adult. But whatever they were for, they prepared me well to put on Christmas concerts that were considered exceptionally good. They prepared me to co-ordinate a programme so that the audience didn't spend more time waiting for the items to come on than for the items on stage. They prepared me to have grade-one children take part comfortably with grade-four and

five children. I understood the shyness of going on stage and the pride when you had got through it. It had been an experience (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Impressed by the instructors at the normal school, Lynass gives a colourful account of them and of the leadership they provided. She concludes with her experience in observation and student teaching as she found herself moving from admiration to commitment.

> When I moved from high school to the normal school, it was my first taste of highly educated people beyond the home; and when I met Miss Fisher, Dr. Coffin, Madame Ellice-Brown, Mr. Loucks, and Mr. McCalla, I knew that I wanted to be in their group. They were most amazing people at The Calgary Normal School. Dr. Ernest W. Coffin, who had come from Prince Edward Island, was a wonderful principal (Lynass: 16 March, 1977). I can remember Dr. Coffin saying to us that we'd be very brave people to go into a rural school and insist that everybody say, "It is I." We'd be wise to teach that, but the students weren't going to say it. They might write it. And I remember one of the normal-school teachers talking about school lunches and suggesting that perhaps the students should have tuna-fish sanwiches. I hadn't tasted tuna fish at that time myself, and some very husky and able young men had got through our school on bread and jam (Lynass: 29 March, 1977). Mr. Hutton was the art teacher, and he was the only teacher I have ever met who could be serious and comic in the same breath. Miss Fisher was, perhaps, the most amazing English teacher I've ever met (Lynass: 16 March, 1977). Miss Fisher would have these great lumbering farm boys acting out the animals for some silly little grade-one, two, or three play; and they'd be having a good time--farm boys who hadn't learned to walk really upright, joining right in with something as silly as
>
> Hi diddle dinkety poppety pip
> The merchants of London
> They wore scarlet.

> They'd be beating it out and marching round the room. I saw human drama right before me. I wouldn't have known what to do in a rural school if I hadn't met Miss Fisher and watched her at work. All of the staff had the same vitality, knowledge, humour, and creativity.
>
> We wandered around all the city schools, watched a few of the city teachers, went to work, and accepted their criticisms. I don't see anything wrong with direction when you're travelling in a wilderness. And then I went into a classroom. I came away from the normal school with honours in teaching. I had been hooked as no alcoholic was ever hooked. I was hooked on teaching because the children responded to me (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Rieger, who had attended the same normal school earlier, looks at his experience with more philosophical detachment than enthusiasm. Perhaps, normal school, with its practical curriculum, was disappointing for him directly after his year at the University. Despite that year, upon entry into The Calgary Normal School, Rieger anomalously found himself ineligible for the first-class program. Achieving grade-twelve standing and attending The Department of Education Summer School later qualified Rieger for the first-class certificate.

> The program in normal school consisted mainly of a review of the material in the public school from grades one to eight. The teachers assumed, rightly in most cases, that we didn't know the history, geography, mathematics, literature, and the other subjects that constituted the public-school program. In addition, there were some hints about how to teach these things; and we did some practice teaching. We planned and taught individual lessons; however, there was no instruction in education, no history of education, or philosophy. We did get a few lectures, about one per week in the last half of the year, on psychology. It was strictly a practical education (Rieger: 22 February, 1977).

> Students who had grade twelve and who went to normal school were eligible for the first-class certificate, and students who had only grade eleven for the second-class certificate. I had been to university for a year after grade eleven, but the normal school didn't deem that equivalent to grade twelve. I had to take grade twelve subsequently; which I did on my own. Because I had taken mathematics, physics, chemistry, French, and English at the university, it wasn't much of a problem for me to get up enough to make it. I had The Program of Studies, and I had some of the text books. I didn't get very good marks in some of the subjects, but I got enough to get credit for grade twelve. I took a five-week Department of Education Summer School which qualified me for the first-class certificate (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Buxton expresses misgivings about the degree to which The Camrose Normal School in 1928-1929 was successful in preparing him for rural teaching. He feels that although the instructors did their best, the curriculum was not very helpful. He remembers that the instruction relied heavily upon lectures and the writing of notes on the blackboard. It is his opinion that more direction could have been focused upon suitable books for school libraries and for personal, professional libraries. While Buxton is ready to admit that youthful preoccupation with extra-curricular interests may have partially obscured the merits of the normal school, he is unconvinced about the value of the training he received.

> My experience seems to be different from those who went to Calgary Normal about which I've heard good reports from those who went there. The teachers at The Camrose Normal were all very close to gods to us because they had B.A. Degrees. I didn't find the program very inspiring in most areas. They did their best, but I didn't get too much inspiration or too much that was of practical value to me when I went into the rural

school. I don't know why that was. Perhaps it was partly our own fault. We were youngsters from the farms, from small communities, from towns of the type that Lougheed was, two hundred and fifty people. Most of us came in with grade eleven and not grade twelve. This was our first time away from home, we were young, the boys liked the girls, and the girls liked the boys. We were involved in all sorts of activities outside the classroom: dancing, wherever dances took place, meeting uptown, or having a cup of coffee together. I have the idea that we didn't take the whole situation too seriously.

There seemed to be quite a little bit of theory, a great deal of lecturing, and much writing notes on the blackboard. The lady who taught us primary work and music made an effort to show us how to teach students to read; but when I went out, I had to devise most of my own methods. Gerald Manning, a history scholar, did attempt to give us a picture of British history, which he did by filling blackboards full of notes which we copied. When I look back over the notes, he did have a pretty fair survey of British history which we were taking at that time in grade six and seven. Almost all of our instructors, the men particularly, had been superintendents of rural schools. We were going into these schools, and I've had the feeling since that they could have given us a better picture of how you manage. We did set up lesson plans for a full school, grades one to eight, which was valuable. I think they might have given us more. They might have said, "Here are some of the books you should have in your own library and in your school libraries" (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

In contrast to his dissatisfaction with content and methods of instruction, Buxton believes that his practical experience in the classroom was worth while.

> Practice teaching we did take seriously, and I remember my practice-teaching lessons. We taught twelve, as I recall; and I rather enjoyed those and the stimulation of trying to get new ideas that I could take into classrooms. This was buttressed by a week in a rural school. Preceding Easter, the normal school closed a week early; and each of us spent a week in a school near our own home working with a teacher. I got considerable experience with Ted Johnson, the teacher with whom I worked during that week. I don't intend to be critical. I shouldn't be. They were attempting to do a good job. Perhaps it was partly that we (I was seventeen) were young and partly that my experience at normal must have been eclipsed by the actual situation that I faced (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Although Buxton is hesitant about the training at normal school, he is appreciative of having met his wife, Dorothy, there.

> At Camrose Normal, I met Dorothy Cox, whom I later persuaded to become Dorothy Buxton--after I paid off my Normal loan, acquired a first-class certificate, and got a job as principal of a two-room school at Gibbons. She has been a marvellous wife, has helped me immeasurably with my career, and has been an excellent mother to our three children (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

While he was at Camrose, Buxton also met Sergeant-Major Barker who became a close friend and whose interest in boxing influenced Buxton into a championship.

> At Camrose I also began a lifelong friendship with Sergeant-Major Bill Barker, who was our physical education instructor. When a few of us expressed an interest in boxing, with which he had had some experience in the army, he organized a boxing club in which we trained two or three evenings a week. In November, Barker registered three of us in the provincial boxing

championships to be held later at the Memorial Hall in Edmonton. We approached the competitions with some trepidation, but were surprised when each of us managed to defeat two opponents and win a title. We continued our participation in tournaments during the next three years while we were teaching near Edmonton (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Buxton found that his boxing title was unexpectedly useful in his career. The boxing sessions he organized, later, became community events as important as dances and the Christmas concert.

Strangely enough, my participation in boxing influenced my teaching career. In my application for a teaching job at Cloverdale School (which I shall mention later), I had enclosed a letter from Barker stating that I held the welterweight championship for Alberta. After a personal interview, the board decided to hire me because I would be able "to keep those tough kids in line." Actually, after I began teaching in the school, I found the "kids" friendly, industrious, and co-operative; and I did not need any pugilistic ability to "keep them in line." Neither did I ever find any need for the big rubber strap that my predecessor had left in the top desk drawer.

For the next three winters, I trained two or three nights a week in the school, sparring with young farmers or the husky sons of older farmers in the area. I think that we had at least fifty or sixty men--sparring partners and observers--out to each session. We pushed all the double desks to the sides of the room, used two gas lamps suspended from the ceiling for illumination, and a member of the board acted as time-keeper for the three-minute rounds. So our boxing sessions, along with the occasional dance and the Christmas concert, became a part of the social life of the community.

Oddly enough, several years later when I applied for the

> principalship at Fort Saskatchewan, I found the male members of the board interested in hiring a teacher who was also a boxer, because he might help the high-school boys to "look after themselves." So we formed a school boxing club at Fort Saskatchewan (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Learning to Teach: Summer Schools and University

Graduating from normal school in the Depression years meant finding a job and then trying to keep it. The young and inexperienced graduates who were able to find work often faced hostile or indifferent boards. The schools in which they tried to teach all subjects to as many as forty children had few books and little equipment. Many teachers, however, found not only enjoyment but challenge in their teaching and assumed an extraordinary professionalism which led them to register in summer schools and to attend university.

Subsequent to their graduation from normal school and coincident with their teaching, Buxton and Rieger attended summer school after summer school to achieve degrees in arts and in their chosen professions. Lynass also attended university and summer school, but in a different way. Although all three had become teachers by chance, experience in the classroom and meeting dedicated people led into commitment, along with which came the desire for knowledge and advancement.

Like Rieger, Buxton also began by working, mostly on his own, to achieve grade-twelve standing. At this time, he met Fred Young, a mathematics teacher, who so impressed Buxton that he specialized in mathematics.

> I had been teaching in one-room schools for six years. The only way you could get to any better school was to have a first-class certificate which meant grade twelve and a Department of Education summer session devoted to extra education courses. Fred Young, a man with tremendous knowledge and enthusiasm, was teaching mathematics at The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology when I was taking my grade twelve. Each year, I'd take two or three grade-twelve subjects and write the exams. History, literature, the survey of the history of literature, Composition 4, which was a text in itself, these could be managed extra-murally. Mathematics, however, I had a little more difficulty with because the explanations in the books, at that time, were not too rounded. At summer sessions in Edmonton, Fred Young taught me trigonometry, analytical geometry, and algebra. I still remember him rather fondly as a person with all sorts of vitality who made me so enthusiastic about mathematics that later, for a while, I became a math specialist. Mathematics was my subject, not English, when I was teaching in the smaller schools (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Rieger's dreams of becoming a chemist were interrupted twice, once by the Depression and then, permanently, by LaZerte who prompted a lifelong dedication to education. Rieger outlines the years from 1929 to 1954 that he spent teaching and going to university as he slowly acquired his B.A., B.Ed., and M.Ed. Degrees. Of the twenty-five years, only two were spent in full-time attendance, his first year in 1929 and the significant year in 1938. Although he thinks that there was an advantage in being a perennial student, he does not recommend it as the best way of obtaining an education.

> Beginning in 1933, each summer I attended the summer session of the University and continued working on my Arts Degree (Rieger:

> 22 February, 1977). I didn't major. I have a dog's breakfast--courses in French and English, economics, history, sociology, physics, and more math than anything else. I didn't pursue chemistry, and the reason I didn't was strictly practical. You had to take labs which were very difficult to manage in summer sessions. You could only take one course which would have meant twelve years of summer school instead of six (Rieger: 2 March, 1977). Having the B.A. enabled me to get a high-school position which paid slightly better than elementary school. The allowance for a degree was usually a hundred dollars, which wasn't a great incentive, but I must have thought it would be eventually; and, of course, I didn't mind learning. I didn't feel it was a burden, and the summer schools were a great change after being out in the country for a year. You didn't run into the city for week-ends in those days (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Rieger explains the events which led him to give up the idea of becoming a chemist in favour of staying in education.

> In 1938, after four years at my second school, I took a year off, completed my B.A. courses, and, in addition, took some courses in what was then The School of Education at the suggestion of a friend. This is a turning-point because it was through the School that I became interested in education. Up to that time, I had been concentrating on the courses for my Arts Degree (Rieger: 22 February, 1977). When my friend offered to take me into his home, board me, so I could finish that year, I had only three courses left to do; so I could take something else. Before he suggested The School of Education, I may have heard of it; but I wasn't interested because I still had in my mind the idea of pursuing chemistry, which is what I would have done if things had turned out differently. I would have spent my life in a lab some place (Rieger: 2 March, 1977). I was in The School of Education when I first realized the possibilities of education.

> The School was in St. Joseph's College: in the east end, there were two classrooms, a couple of small offices, one of which was a library. Dr. LaZerte and Dr. Smith were there, as well as Kenneth Argue, a grad student who did some lecturing. The enrolment was about twenty-five. These were students who had a Bachelor of Arts or Science and were preparing to teach high school. After I had been in the School, I knew I would continue in education. I don't know exactly when I realized this, but there is no question that Dr. LaZerte was instrumental in my decision. I have never regretted it (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).
>
> I continued in the next few summer sessions and received a Bachelor of Education in 1945 which required about six courses. At that time, it was a degree after a B.A. or a B.Sc. There was no undergraduate B.Ed. I received the Master of Education in 1954, also by way of summer sessions (Rieger: 22 February, 1977).
>
> My university education continued over the period from 1929 to 1954, when I first started to when I finished my Master's. That's twenty-five years. I was continually a student, all in summer sessions, except for the first year in 1929 and the year in 1938. That had some advantages, but I don't recommend it as a way of getting a university education (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Buxton, whose experience in acquiring his university education parallels Rieger's, draws much the same conclusion: that it was a slow and frustrating endeavour. Although Buxton's B.A. was general and he was still teaching mathematics, he was also coming under the influence of impressive teachers, Salter, Broadus, and McCourt, and beginning to lean more toward English, especially poetry.

> After I'd been teaching for a while and had completed my grade twelve, I decided that what I would need if I were going

to get anywhere in teaching was a university degree. I had some money saved. I spent a year in university, got married, and from then on, summer after summer, I took my university degrees, the B.A. and the B.Ed. at Alberta and the M.A. at Washington. I would teach through the year at a salary of nine hundred or a thousand or eleven hundred dollars. My wife, Dorothy, was always there, always cheerful, helpful, encouraging, and frugal. She would manage to save enough so we could get a room somewhere in Edmonton so that I could go to summer school, taking two subjects a year until I got my B.A. Degree. We had a basement room the summer I was studying Shakespeare with Dr. Salter. Dot would be feeding our daughter, Bonnie, who had been born that June; and, at the same time, she'd have the Shakespeare book open, asking me quotations from various plays so I could spot the quotations. Bonnie became quite literary. She has spent her life in writing, and there was every good reason for that: she was learning Shakespeare before she was weaned!

My B.A. was as much in history as in English, and I didn't really start to specalize until I went into the B.Ed. program. My Master's at Washington and my Ph.D. were loaded largely with English because, by then, I found this field was most interesting. I think my background unconsciously had been in English. I enjoyed poetry. I think the influence was Broadus and Salter, also Ed McCourt from The University of Saskatchewan who taught us Romantic prose and poetry during a summer session. Taking most of my B.A. at summer school, I think five summer sessions after my one year in, my choice was pretty well limited. I took economics, two or three history courses, Romantic and Victorian literature; and I took Math. 40 because I was teaching math at the time. I think the range was greater, and there was less of this matter of a major and a minor: that came a little bit later. My degree was wide open (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Outlining his academic aspirations and motivations, Buxton goes on to observe that while he has been happy in his work, spending nineteen years to obtain his degrees entailed considerable sacrifice for him and his family.

> Why the summer after summer? Well, I wanted to finish that degree. When they organized The Faculty of Education here, I was on the demonstration staff. I thought I'd better find out what it was all about, so I took a Bachelor of Education during evening and summer session. Then I went to Calgary on the staff of The Faculty of Education. B.A., B.Ed., and a professor in a university? Not good enough. So I went to The University of Washington three summers, wrote a thesis, and got my Master's Degree. But Master's Degree? University professor? Not good enough. You're not going to get to full professor with a Master's Degree; so when I had the opportunity to go to Stanford on a fellowship, I took it. There it is. It was a matter of what's the next step ahead if I'm going to get anywhere.
>
> I've been generally happy in my work. I've enjoyed relationships with students throughout rural schools and villages, Edmonton junior and senior high schools, and on the Faculty, the undergraduates and grads; so I don't know that I would make any changes. I would say, knowing what I know now, if I could have I would have borrowed the money to take my university degrees rather than taking almost all of them at summer school. I spent nineteen summers taking various degrees, which simply meant that time was taken away from recreation and family. I think that we would have had a more complete and rounded life if I'd been able to get the degrees more quickly. Perhaps that's a dream because, at that time, money was very, very difficult to borrow. We simply had to live on what we could save out of my salaries in the schools. The slow rate at which I got my university

> education was a frustration. Working summer after summer and winter after winter doesn't leave you much chance for holidays and doesn't do that much for the family (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Unlike Buxton and Rieger, Agnes Lynass had graduated with a first-class certificate; consequently, she did not have to achieve grade-twelve standing while teaching. Although she joined the Air Force, she does not consider either her learning or her teaching to have been interrupted; on the contrary, she believes her service to have been advantageous professionally.

Upon her return to Alberta, the Veterans' Program enabled her to obtain her B.Ed. in full-time attendance in The Faculty of Education, where she found herself inspired and challenged. Like Buxton, Lynass had been originally interested in mathematics. By a curious coincidence, it was Dr. Buxton who influenced her to change to English. Although Lynass did not have to acquire degrees in piecemeal fashion, she, too, became a lifelong student, registering in evening and summer courses at The University of Alberta, and especially, in summer courses at other universities, which gave her the opportunity to travel and study. Over the years, Lynass has studied not only in Alberta but elsewhere in Canada, the United States, Scotland, Wales, and England.

> Coming back after the War, I think circumstances and people met. It was a good time to be in education. I entered The Faculty of Education in 1946 on the Veterans' Program. LaZerte was Dean when I took my B.Ed. Dr. Gillies was one of my education professors, and Dr. Coutts was another. They were both in methods courses. I could say nothing about The Faculty of Education but what was glowing.

One time when I was at The University of Alberta, I taught a lesson for Dr. Buxton. His class was exciting and wonderful. When Dr. Buxton asked me what mark I expected to get, I said I didn't care. I'd had such a good time that if he failed me, it would still be the best lesson I'd ever taught. Dr. Buxton was the person who decided me that I was going to teach English. In order to teach my lesson in his class, I spent seventy-two hours in preparation for it. I worked with Dr. Kreisel and approached at least four of my English profs at the other end of the campus. When I went into Dr. Buxton's class to teach that lesson, I was prepared. It was a lesson on what he called puzzle poems, a real challenge. I never looked back after that (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

I very early learned the joy of learning something, and I have made it a point never to quit going to university. Once I had a degree, it gave me the right to the job and liberated me so that I was free to take something else (Lynass: 23 March, 1977). I have studied in the States, in Glasgow, in Edinburgh, at Barrie, and at Eastbourne. I spent a summer at McGill. I went down to Stratford in connection with the university at Hamilton, where I met John Brown from Sussex and Barbara Mendonca from Brazil, two international Shakespeare scholars. I've worked with The National Film Board, gone overseas to The British Film Institute, and another time to The Society of Educational Television and Films. I took my B.A. in history here in 1962 after I had completed an M.A. in English and found myself wanting (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Teaching: The Schools of the Thirties

For all three educators, learning and teaching were integral. While they learned both disciplines and methodology in normal schools, in the Air Force, in summer sessions, or in full-time attendance at universities

here and elsewhere, they were also learning to teach by teaching. Each of the three began by teaching in the rural schools of Alberta in the thirties; for each, the experiences were various and significant. Their reminiscences provide not only a colourful picture of early and later rural schools but also assess the virtues and weaknesses of the system.

In 1931, Rieger, however, was neither teaching nor learning in an academic sense, although he was still learning about the Depression and its penchant for interrupting his plans. It was 1932 before he found employment. Subsequently, the experience for Thomas Rieger, who spent thirty-four years as teacher and as principal in small town and village schools, was larded with frustration arising from the poverty he observed, from poorly equipped schools, from uninspired inspection, and from professional isolation. On the other hand, he was also afforded a great amount of satisfaction and accomplishment as he successfully countered the obstacles in his way.

> In May, June, July, and August of 1931, I went looking for a job. I couldn't find one. There were several hundred other teachers in the same situation. By that time, the total number graduating from the three normal schools was about one thousand. The number of schools across the province had not increased; and people who had jobs were holding on to them, unlike in the twenties, when many teachers would teach a year or two and take up something else because there were tremendous opportunities in those years. I was unemployed for a whole year, except for one week's work stacking wheat bundles for which I earned six dollars and fifty cents (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).
>
> However, in 1932, I got a job at a school a few miles south of Delia called the Enterprise Valley School District. This school had about twenty pupils from grades one to ten. I lived in a teacherage there, although it was so close to Delia that I

> came home every week-end. I taught in that school for two years, at the end of which time the school board thought it was time for a change; so I was fired (Rieger: 22 February, 1977). I was disenchanted. I don't think I did a very good job there, which isn't surprising when I consider what I knew then. Perhaps it was just as well that I had to move. My later experiences were much better (Rieger: 22 February, 1977).

Rieger presents a compelling and uncompromising sketch of the teacher and the school of the thirties with its lack of equipment and books. From his remarks upon inspectors and working conditions arises a keen sense of isolation.

> It is hard to imagine now what a one-room school was like. Just picture the teacher, a boy or a girl, eighteen years old, who has finished grade eleven, usually in some small town or village. At that time, about half the teacher candidates came from small places. This person had a year in the normal school and went out to a one-room school which would have ten to forty or more students (these were extreme--the average was about twenty) from grade one to grade nine or ten. This school had a little blackboard and some desks. Sometimes, you could adjust the desks with a wrench. There was no provision for artificial lighting. The heating was generally a big stove called a Waterbury. It burned coal in the places where I taught, wood in some places. There was a jacket around this stove so the heat tended to circulate. The jacket would protect you so you could get close to the stove. The school rooms varied but were usually about twenty feet by thirty-five, a fair size, which the stove heated fairly well although the floor was cold. The air was very dry. There was provision for putting water in a tank on the stove, but it was inadequate.
>
> There was no equipment--one box of chalk, some paper, maybe a map or two, sometimes a globe, a yardstick, and a handbell.

> Most schools had what was called a library. That was a couple of shelves that held some books. In one school, there were books which had been donated before I got there, including some good classics. I read everything I could lay hands on, naturally, because there wasn't much to do. I can remember Henry Fielding's Adventures of Tom Jones. I had never heard of Fielding. I found it most interesting: I don't recall that the kids ever read it. For physical education all we had was a ball and a bat.
>
> You were entirely on your own although there were school inspectors who came around once in a while. For example, I was in one school two years, and an inspector came once; I was four years in another, and the inspector came twice. They would look at the condition of the premises, including out-buildings; and if there was something wrong, they'd get after the school board about it. They would look at the pupils' work. They would listen and watch you teach and make an assessment. There were no continuous contracts. There was no provision for any Board of Reference. In fact, teachers had no rights at all (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Rieger looks back to his experiences at his second school with a feeling of achievement. His account is appreciative of community interest in teaching but tempered by realization of the kind of poverty which necessitates a particularly grim inventiveness. Rieger also displays a sense of frustration arising from the knowledge that schools lagged so far behind the rest of society.

> After being fired from Enterprise Valley, I found another school, also not far from Delia, called Springwater. It was a much better school building. It was made of stone; as a matter of fact, the building still stands in 1977. Also, it was, in some ways, a better community. There was a community spirit there, an interest in their school and in other activities.

I stayed there four years, and look back on that time as one of the more interesting and worthwhile periods of my teaching (Rieger: 22 February, 1977). I was happy there because I felt some sense of accomplishment with the twenty-eight kids I was responsible for (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

The school in Springwater was a bit unusual in that the desks were movable. The people who built the school--the area wasn't settled until about 1920 and then mostly by veterans of the First War--were relatively young and wanted to use the school for dancing; so they made the desks movable. It was a good, hardwood floor, which was a rare thing in schools. Phys. Ed. was a particular interest of mine at that time; so a couple of times a week, we moved the desks aside and used the floor for gymnastics, tumbling, and pyramid building. Eventually, we did some apparatus work with a vaulting horse and parallel bars that we improvised (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Although I can't think of anything that was very traumatic, there were frustrations. One was the lack of equipment in schools which wasn't shocking to me because I started with nothing, so my expectations weren't very high; but I was always aware that there was a lot of room for improvement. I can remember improvising all kinds of equipment for physical education. At Springwater, the farmer, in whose house I boarded, and I built a skating rink. In a corner of his land, there was a natural spring. There we made the rink. The kids got some skates one way or another. There was only one who had been on the ice before and had seen hockey. He had spent a year in Drumheller. All the other kids had never even seen anybody on skates. Anyway, I was going to teach them to play hockey; but they had no hockey sticks. This resourceful farmer--this is hard to believe in retrospect, but it's a fact--went into a little grove where he cut a bunch of willows, selecting ones with a suitable crook and made hockey sticks. That's an extreme improvisation, but there were many others. I made vaulting horses, parallel bars, showed the kids how to

> whittle out Indian clubs. We made our own mats out of sacks and straw. In such things as duplicating equipment, we were still using Hectographs in the schools long after any business place had Gestetners. It always bothered me that everybody had these things except the schools. I think I had been teaching about ten years before I saw a radio in the school, in spite of the fact that radio had been fairly popular since the mid-twenties. I always felt that we were behind times (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

In 1929, Buxton graduated from normal school and began looking for a school. In an essay Buxton wrote for inclusion in Sheffield's study (1974: 61), Buxton explains that "after I emerged from the Camrose Normal School . . . I wrote sixty-seven applications for a position, and interviewed school boards all over Northern Alberta, before I found a sanctuary from the rigours of the Depression in a rural school north of Edmonton." The conditions of his sanctuary were such, however, that classroom management in the one-room school with thirty-eight students in grades one to eight, a rigid and extensive curriculum, and a lack of books made for "a task that seemed to be about as frustrating and unproductive as the labour of Sisyphus" (Sheffield, 1974: 61). The inspector, with a rather austere philosophy of inspection, seems to have confirmed Buxton's own views of his management. In this context, it is not surprising that Buxton, in retrospect, would say that he was "at the beginning not too entranced with teaching" (Buxton: 18 April, 1977). When he learned, however, that not only could children work independently but that they could help each other, as well, Buxton found that he had become a "manager for an educational enterprise" as a result of which "the blackboards bloomed with maps, diagrams, drawings, and time charts in coloured chalk" (Sheffield, 1974: 61-62). Along with this transformation of his teaching

techniques and his classroom came satisfaction: "I found that I enjoyed teaching. I enjoyed the relationships with students, and this seems to have persisted ever since" (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Buxton begins his account of rural teaching by explaining in detail the difficulties of daily life quite apart from the classroom for a teacher in the thirties.

> Although not too serious, an early frustration was conditions in rural areas where I began teaching. The first four years I batched in a school called Cloverdale in a very primitive area; for example, during the winter the roads drifted in. I had a Model T Ford which I couldn't possibly get started in cold weather, and if I had I couldn't have driven over the roads. What I would do is go to the neighbours who were on a road that was open, go to Gibbons or Fort Saskatchewan to buy my groceries, bring them back to their house, and then pack them in to the teacherage on my back. I may sound as if things were very unsatisfactory. They weren't. I was young, and I rather enjoyed it; but the living in rural areas at that time was, to a degree, primitive (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Books were scarce at the time when Buxton began teaching; he soon found it necessary to exercise the kind of resourcefulness demanded of teachers in areas where materials and supplies were non-existent or inadequate.

> I remember going to The Institute of Applied Arts and getting little manuals that summarized the history that we were supposed to teach in grades five to eight. These manuals were very valuable to me at that time because <u>The Program of Studies</u> said: "Grade Five: Canadian Explorers. La Verendrye, Samuel Hearne, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson. Indian Life on the Plains. The Canadian Pacific Railway. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police." <u>The Program of Studies</u> gave me a basis from which to work, but

I needed other books which I had to find myself and gradually build my own library. I took out my Books of Knowledge to provide some background to the history courses. I think most of the students enjoyed them as much as I had during my boyhood. When I brought them home after five years in rural schools, Mother was concerned about their battered condition. But Dad grinned and said, "Perhaps that shows they have been well used."

We had a few textbooks. The Public School Geography, which looked at the various continents and countries, was a useful book because students could read and draw their own maps on the blackboard. They could do their own learning. Mathematics books, as I recall, were very limited. At first, I used to have to write problems on the blackboard for each grade (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

For Buxton, the intricacies of the ungraded classroom initially presented a problem of baffling dimensions, in the face of which his first inspector displayed an evident aptitude for diagnostic clarity.

A great part of my learning to teach in rural schools had to be achieved in the schools themselves. When you have eight grades, each grade is going to get only one-eighth of your time, which means that seven-eighths of the time of each student is spent in the school working at something independently. It has to be that way. All right, what do you do? What do you have the students do during that seven-eighths of the time that is productive? How can you possibly manage to have grade ones being occupied for seven-eighths of the day outside of your presence? (Buxton: 21 April, 1977)

I went through a long period of teaching in which I had school inspectors, starting with J.J. Le Blanc in my first year, coming into my room from time to time to inspect. We call them superintendents now or supervisors. In those days they were inspectors of schools, high-school inspectors or public-school inspectors. There was nothing wrong with

the term at that time. Although there weren't very many times when I didn't learn something from those evaluations, the first one or two were very traumatic experiences. Le Blanc, the first inspector, was very dissatisfied, suggesting that there must be something else I could do to handle those eight grades at Cloverdale. I was forced to find a solution. He didn't give me a solution: he just said, "These students need to be working more if they're going to learn." I learned from that (Buxton: 20 April, 1977). My solution was to have one teaching the other all the time. I think a lot of the learning took place whether the teacher organized it or not. Brothers helped sisters in school, and I think learning went on at home at that time. It was the recreation for the evening after the cows had been milked and the chickens had been fed. In a way, it had its advantages, didn't it? It was co-operative learning. It had to be a co-operative learning situation, a self-involvement in education (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Lynass taught in rural schools in the years immediately preceding World War Two. Although living conditions in the rural areas were primitive by today's standards or when compared to the cities at the time, Lynass feels that her early background, her love of children, her good fortune in coming into contact with two extraordinary superintendents, her family, her ease and familiarity with life in small communities, and the supportiveness of the communities in which she worked all combined to permit her to enjoy teaching despite the hard work. Consequently, she is able to look back with affectionate nostalgia. In her account of rural teaching, Lynass is able to view the hardships in the light of a good-humoured acceptance of herself and her enthusiastic inexperience.

The rural-school situation was really quite different from today and from city life at the time. The really good high schools were all located in the cities. The normal-school

graduates who were urbanites may have received a traumatic shock when they discovered the out-door privies whereas people such as I had never gone to a school with anything else but. We accepted the idea of school not starting on time if the vans couldn't get there. We accepted the idea of playing basketball with our overshoes and gloves on because we were used to that life (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

My first school was in a Nazarene community with very definite ideas of sin. Their ideas and mine were quite, quite different; but those Nazarene people were not in any way narrow-minded. When they discovered that I loved those children, they would move any obstacle they could to make life more agreeable and pleasant for me. When I wanted dances in the school, they would not come to them. They didn't feel that a house of education should be used for dances, but they would not do anything to stop them as long as there was no drinking. I agreed with them about the drinking because I was as narrow-minded on that point as they were. If they'd had a particularly delicious Sunday dinner, they always saved some of it; and I got it on Monday. And it wasn't leftovers. It was selected. If I were going to be in the community on Sunday, I was always invited somewhere for dinner.

The teacherage was one room, maybe twelve by twenty, not too well built. When there was a snowstorm from the west, the snow used to come in through the windows or the door, right onto my bed. It was cold; but when he heard that the snow came in, one of the trustees came down on his own and put felt material around the windows. You could no longer open the window, but the snow didn't come in. The trustees were very concerned that I had enough wood and coal. I don't think my food bill ran more than fifteen dollars a month. They always saw that I shared with the family. All in all, they tried to make it as comfortable as possible (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Close family ties, the sheer quantity of work required of a rural teacher, Lynass' own particular sense of realizing the strengths of the community, and her ability to capitalize on those strengths by allowing community involvement in the school helped to make her rural experience memorable.

> I was six miles from a small town, three hundred yards from a very friendly farm house, a half-mile from one of the best friends I've ever known, and maybe fifteen miles from home. One brother came out to see me every Wednesday night and took me dancing if he could find a spot to dance. On Friday nights I always went out with the crowd from the community. It was just like being at home. I didn't have any of those experiences where there was loneliness. My first year I worked day and night. My mother always expected me home for Sunday dinner. A second brother would sometimes pick me up at four o'clock and deliver me back at seven because there was such a tremendous amount of work to do. A teacher had to put work on the board to keep the students busy. A teacher had to have what later became worksheets. I don't think there was any time to be lonely. As well, the other rural teachers were the friendliest people in the world. If they were going by your door, they stopped in and invited you along. If you couldn't go along, they stopped in on their way back to have a cup of tea.
>
> I enjoyed that community. I felt liked and respected. I felt every child in that community was as near genius as it was humanly possible. You can see, obviously, I hadn't met too many geniuses. But they were easy to teach. Everybody in the community would help. Mr. George Spires, who had travelled very, very widely and had been a British soldier, didn't mind coming over to teach a British history lesson to my students. Mr. Blakey, a Scotsman, would stop at the school, sit down, and tell the students what it was

like in Scotland. Mrs. Lowry, who played the guitar, would come in and have the children sing. I think that was where my common sense came out. I never refused help from anyone. As I look back on it, I think it was what had been taught me at home: that you must never say "No, thank you" to anyone who was trying to help you (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Like Rieger and Buxton, Lynass displayed undaunted inventiveness in countering the lack of supplies in the one-room school. Just as she was capable of using members and materials available in the community as resources so too she was able to turn the superintendents' visits to her advantage.

I enjoyed teaching those students. We didn't have any readers for grade one, so the children made their own from the Eaton's and Simpson's catalogues and the pictures they brought from home. In these readers, they used the vocabulary they had. Every grade one in my class--the whole three of them--could write "threshing-machine" because they wanted to know how to write it. They could write "cattails" because they brought cattails to school and put labels on them. They had a vocabulary at the end of grade one of about three hundred words that they could write, using sentences. One student, by the end of grade one, had read forty-three little booklets, either from those that we had made or those we had borrowed from other schools.

The two superintendents I had in my early days were so helpful. They brought me material to try out, they made suggestions, and they created enthusiasm in me (Lynass: 23 March, 1977). Mr. McLean was aware that the personality of the teacher was more important than any other single facet in a rural school. When he came to the school, he not only inspired the teacher but he inspired all the students. He would encourage us not only to work together in the classroom but to play together outside. If we were out skating down on

> the ice, he would give us the afternoon to continue; and he would come back some other time to inspect the school. He was followed by Mr. W.E. Hay, who had a concept of life that, again, inspired people to do better than they thought they could (Lynass: 16 March, 1977). These two superintendents were great teachers and wonderful men.

Lynass, like Buxton, concludes that a major strength of the rural school was the spirit of co-operative learning.

> My experience in rural Alberta was good (Lynass: 29 March, 1977). I learned there that I didn't have to teach those students anything that another student could teach them; so while I was teaching grades eight or nine, grades one and two were bothering the fours and fives about correct spelling, how to use a dictionary, and where to put a comma. The grade fives very often wouldn't know, so they would look it up. I learned that the only true teaching is sharing. Those students learned even though they didn't learn from me. They learned from each other (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Social Credit and Its Effects Upon Education

As the three rural teachers were contending with their communities and their classrooms, the world was full of events whose significance for education proved enormous. Although the schools in which the three were teaching were not much different from the ones they had attended, within a very short time those schools disappeared. Aberhart's government, with its curious emphasis on social action, bolstered by the huge efforts of Barnett and LaZerte, radically changed the nature of education. The Social Credit government in Alberta was strongly flavoured by fundamentalist religion and displayed conservative attitudes in morality; hence, their educational legislation with its emphasis on social change is a little

unusual. T.C. Byrne, iconoclastic Deputy-Minister in the later Social Credit administration, wonders why it was possible for him "to occupy positions of influence when I was anything but typical of the kind of person you'd expect a Social Credit government to appoint" (McIntosh and Bryce, 1977: 41). The Second World War and Alberta's prosperity following it also added dramatic changes. While it is tempting to see in the years between the second half of the thirties and the sixties a kind of educational renaissance in Alberta, it must be remembered that a renaissance also carries with it its own problems and excesses. Certainly, however, those years were exciting for teachers.

In 1921, The United Farmers of Alberta had defeated the Liberals, who had governed Alberta from 1905. In 1935, the Social Credit slogan boasted that "The Eyes of the World are on Alberta" (Irving, 1959: 3). Whether the eyes of the world were on Alberta or not, most Albertans had undoubtedly heard the educational plank of the Social Credit platform. Carefully polemical and politically vague, asseverating that "An Eighteenth Century System can never handle a Twentieth Century Problem," its provisions contain little that is startling:

> (a) Our schools should at once be made to supply the training that the New Social Order demands . . . .
> (b) Further attempts should be made to bring the various Provincial Educational Systems into greater harmony (Irving, 1959: 350).

From these provisions it would be difficult to predict the immense changes effected by the Social Credit government.

Many teachers had watched Aberhart's movement with optimistic interest for two reasons: Aberhart was an educator, and the U.F.A. government had aroused more animus than amity from teachers. The Alberta

Teachers' Association had frequently been splenetic upon the subject of Perren Baker, the U.F.A. Minister of Education. In the years following 1935, Albertans were to discover some of the implications of the "New Social Order," not only as they affected (or, as in the case of the chimerical dividends, did not affect) daily life, but also as they pertained specifically to education.

Rieger and Buxton recall Aberhart and the Social Credit movement. Rieger comments on its rise, as, supported by the cascade of hard-won Depression nickels and dimes, Aberhart and his followers spoke their way to power by means of speaking tours, study meetings, and radio broadcasts.

> During the Depression, various reform movements sprang up. The most notable and effective one was in Alberta--the Social Credit movement which was supported all across the province by nickels and dimes. The big business interests didn't make any contributions to that movement. During the meetings, a collection was taken up which paid for the radio broadcasts. It was probably one of the first great political movements that was carried on by radio. William Aberhart was exceedingly effective on the air and on the platform, too. His movement, of course, combined religion with politics; but many people who followed him didn't listen to the religion in particular. Although I was not actively involved, I went to a number of meetings. It's interesting that quite a number of teachers were directly involved and several were elected to the legislature (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Not only does Buxton remember listening to Aberhart and the rancour he stirred in the press, but Buxton also anecdotally explains the personal impact of Aberhart's economic policies.

> I didn't know Aberhart well personally; but I was rather thrilled, it would be about 1935, when I went to the Exhibition

> Grounds where he spoke to a large number of people on Social Credit and the advantages of Social Credit. He had two visions: one was Social Credit; the other was The Bible Institute at Calgary from which he emerged as a speaker. My memory of him is of a forceful speaker in terms of the visions that he had of something that might make the lives of people better.
>
> I remember The Calgary Herald, which was always vigourously opposed to Aberhart, had a cartoonist, named Stew Cameron, who devoted almost full time to drawing cartoons of Aberhart and the strange, weird, and wonderful things that he was attempting to do. Although Aberhart didn't achieve the Douglas type of Social Credit, he did shake things up in terms of the economics of Alberta. He put a moratorium on all farm debts, making it impossible for mortgage companies to foreclose because of debts incurred earlier by farmers who, because of the Depression, now faced a different kind of situation. It was absolutely impossible for the farmers to pay those debts: butter sold at ten cents a pound, eggs at five cents a dozen, and cattle-shipping charges were greater than the price received. As a result of Aberhart's action, however, mortgage companies and other lending institutions stopped all credit in Alberta so that for many years it was impossible to get a loan: for example, when Mrs. Buxton and I came into Edmonton and attempted to buy a house, getting any sort of loan or mortgage was almost impossible. We had to find other ways of getting our own house. These are personal things, but they're part of the picture that I'm talking about (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

If the impact of Aberhart's presence and his economic reforms was prodigious, no less so was the educational legislation enacted by the new government. As a result of this legislation, teachers were brought into the social order, the large units came into being, and teacher education was revolutionized. Rieger juxtaposes the new government with its predecessor in his outline of Social Credit legislation and its effect upon education.

The historical events that had the greatest impact on education during the years occurred between 1936 and 1948 because of a new government. There had been a United Farmers of Alberta government from 1921 to 1935. I can't recall anything that was done by the U.F.A. government to improve education. I know from the history of the A.T.A. that there was absolutely no sympathy with any idea of a teachers' union: that was anathema to people in that government. A lot of the members of the legislature were, naturally, members of local school boards who wanted to preserve their autocratic rights and privileges.

Large units for rural school administration had been proposed by the U.F.A. government, but no legislation was passed. The new government, elected in '35--and, of course, it wasn't until 1936 that the first legislature met--but at that time, the government enacted the legislation to create the large school units, the school divisions. These, in the beginning, comprised about a hundred to a hundred and fifty rural districts. Originally, they didn't include town and village districts, although, subsequently, within the next fifteen years, most of them came in. The school divisions were a tremendous advance. Within about ten or twelve years, more than half of the one-room schools disappeared; and the kids went to centralized schools, a really revolutionary step, because in the rural schools, considering the qualifications of the teacher and the lack of equipment, kids just didn't have any chance. I won't say that often there weren't resourceful, enthusiastic, and kind teachers in those schools who, by the sheer force of their ingenuity and personality, were useful, and inspiring to those pupils; but the odds were against it (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Teacher training in Alberta from 1906 had adhered to the system of high school followed by normal school. Since 1924, The Alberta Teachers' Association, LaZerte, and Newland had all been urging university teacher

training and arousing antagonism by doing so. In view of this background, the Social Credit move was a decisive one: normal schools disappeared almost immediately.

> In 1944, the government turned over teacher education to the universities. That wasn't immediately of any earth-shaking significance. It didn't revolutionize things over a period of two or three years as the school divisions did; but looking back on it now, it was a great step forward because it has resulted in all teachers having a university degree. If we had maintained our normal schools, we would probably have had two kinds of teachers: elementary-school teachers who had normal school and high-school teachers who had normal school plus a degree. There would have been no incentive for elementary teachers to get degrees (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Not only did Social Credit legislation make for vast educational change but it also concerned itself specifically with the fortunes of teachers. Rieger's explication makes clear the strengthened position of teachers, both professionally and socially, as a result of Social Credit activity.

> There was other legislation of far-reaching effect that had to do more directly with teachers. One was The Teaching Profession Act, originally prepared by the Farmers government in 1935, creating The Alberta Teachers' Association. The essential clause, however, that all members of the teaching force shall be members of The Alberta Teachers' Association, was omitted from the Act by the Farmers; hence the Act merely changed the name from Alliance to Association. In 1936, the essential clause was added. It, along with the by-laws of the Association relating to discipline for unethical conduct, has had obvious significance.
>
> Security of tenure for teachers was provided when a Board of Reference came into being in the late thirties. In 1941,

teachers were allowed to use the provisions of The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act for strikes and conciliation. Again, the significance of that has been obvious over the years.

Another very important piece of legislation was The Teacher's Retirement Fund Act in 1939. The Farmers had been absolutely adamant that there was no more reason to provide a pension plan for teachers than for farmers. Alberta was about the last part of the civilized world to adopt some sort of pension plan for teachers. The initial provisions were very, very small, twenty-five dollars a month. Teachers contributed three percent of salary and school boards a like amount. That period, from 1936 to 1948 was a most extraordinary time for educational legislation. Nothing like that has happened since and certainly not before in Alberta (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Within Alberta, then, education seemed to be living up to the Social Credit slogan and moving into the twentieth century.

THE WAR YEARS

On September 3, 1939, Britain and France went to war. A week of neutrality later, after Parliamentary debate, Canada issued its Proclamation: "NOW THEREFORE WE do hereby Declare and Proclaim that a State of War with the German Reich exists and has existed in Our Dominion of Canada as and from the tenth day of September, 1939" (Stacey, 1972: 602). As a result, many teachers in Alberta enlisted, and many others left teaching to "enter essential war industry" (Chalmers, 1967: 108) before the federal government encouraged by provincial anxiety froze the remainder in their classrooms (Chalmers, 1967: 109). Despite such measures, the teacher shortage approached crisis; and Alberta was forced to adopt as many measures as ingenuity and economy could devise: housewives who had

previously been teachers were asked to return, teacher-training programs went into emergency production, and sitters were engaged for children registered with The Correspondence School Branch.

Learning and Teaching in the Air Force

Lynass, like many of her colleagues who enlisted in the Armed Services, became an instructor. She explains how her experiences in the Air Force changed her convictions and outlook on life.

> I enlisted in the Air Force, and that experience changed my whole outlook (Lynass: 16 March, 1977). Both my parents were Scottish, and it was expected of us. I could honestly say that when I enlisted I was patriotic.
>
> I started in Toronto at Old Havergal College. That was initial training where we learned to march and to get up on time, to generally follow what is called Air Force rules. We had a Drill Sergeant who didn't have too much faith in us, and the bugler boy was so shy that we captured him one morning. It was the first time in my life I ever had bacon and tomatoes for breakfast (Lynass: 23 March, 1977). I saw so many other ways of living and met so many people who had been but names to me (Lynass: 16 March, 1977); for example, Princess Alice, who was the wife of the Earl of Athlone, Governor-General of Canada at that time, visited the local station as part of her duties. We were little western nonentities who knew princesses only through fairy stories. You don't know how naïve we were at that time. She had flesh and blood! (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

The War and her involvement in the Armed Services had a profound effect upon Lynass' beliefs about people and behaviour: she found that previous standards of judgment were not broad enough to accommodate her War experiences.

> I learned that my parochial background needed broadening, my tolerance towards and for other people needed to be stretched and stretched and stretched again; and I saw courage and generosity and compassion and humour (Lynass: 23 March, 1977). I discovered that my Scotch Presbyterian standards were not necessarily right, that tolerance and humour were much better assets than John Knox, and that Burns was a much more interesting person than many of the rigid disciplinarians I had met in Alberta. I started to realize that my father had been a much better teacher than my schooling and that, at best, I was only part of struggling humanity (Lynass: 16 March, 1977). And I think I came out of the Air Force much better prepared to be a member of society than I was when I went in. I went in knowing the rules of behaviour. I came out doubting all of them. I was patriotic when I enlisted: when I left the Armed Service, after the bombing of Hiroshima, I don't know if I have ever been really patriotic since. When I went in, the use of the right fork was important. When I came out, it was how you used your fellow man. I don't regret those years (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

After basic training, Lynass took six weeks of training in motor transport and was later stationed at Claresholm, Prince Edward Island, and Jarvis, Ontario, where she was asked to teach a group of ground-crew personnel. Following her two years at Jarvis, Lynass "hopped all over everywhere, doing special work." In 1944, she was "overseas, doing odds and ends." The following year, Lynass was back in Canada at Mountainview in the Guidance Department helping veterans in their return to civilian life.

Not only did Lynass come out of the Armed Services with different convictions, she also gained insight into learning and teaching.

> I discovered how much I could learn, how fast, and what an asset it was. Up till that time, I had learned only what the books told me. I learned that teaching was not necessarily working out questions on the blackboard. I also learned that there is such a thing as a flexible schedule. Flexibility was much more evident in the Air Force than I have ever found it in the public-school system (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Teaching in the War-Year Schools

The War years found Rieger teaching in rural high schools in Alberta. Starting in 1939, Rieger spent two years teaching in Berwyn, in the Peace River country, followed by a year at Taber after which he went to Mirror as the principal of the Mirror Consolidated School where he stayed six years. In the post-war years, Rieger taught in the Iron Springs School, in the Lethbridge School Division, and from 1949 to 1966 in Picture Butte. He describes the effects of the War in terms of both its immediate impact and its long-term effects.

> The War was a historical event that certainly had effects on every aspect of life, including teaching. It was the immediate cause of the teacher shortage which lasted thirty years, from 1941 to 1971. It wasn't altogether that teachers were in the Armed Forces, but that many had left teaching earlier to go into more lucrative things. During the War, we were frozen. We couldn't move. Not only that, our salaries were frozen, too. Teachers across Canada felt very bitter about this since people in the factories, for example, were doing relatively well. After the War, salaries were very depressed, and many teachers went into business and industry where things were much better. Another effect was that it brought back into teaching women who had left teaching, usually because of marriage, many of whom had never intended in the first place to make a career of teaching. However, many of

> the women who came back stayed with it, improved their qualifications, and are now retiring on pension (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).
>
> For years, many schools employed unqualified people as supervisors of correspondence courses: "sitters" they were called (Rieger: 2 March, 1977). The Correspondence Branch of The Department of Education, while it wasn't a direct result of the War and the teacher shortage, was certainly given a great impetus.
>
> And, of course, the War meant that nothing was done about school buildings till about 1947 or '8. Since the buildings hadn't been any too good to begin with, you can imagine their state during and just after the War. I remember at Picture Butte that before the new high school was ready in 1950, we used (and had been using for several years) one-room schools that had been hauled in from various places in the school division. There were five or six of them, just barely habitable. There was a great spate, then, of school building, beginning around 1948 to 1950 which has kept up practically until the present time. In fact, some of the schools that were built around 1950 weren't very good, either, and are now being replaced (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Buxton spent the years between 1939 and 1948 in rural high schools at Gibbons, Radway, and Fort Saskatchewan, in Edmonton junior and senior high schools, and as a demonstration teacher in the model school which was part of LaZerte's training program for prospective teachers registered in The Faculty of Education. Buxton's comments about the teacher shortage reflect the set-back in teacher training; for no sooner had the new Faculty been formed than it had to cope with the shortage of teachers.

> Continuous pressure from LaZerte, Newland, and others had resulted in the formation of The Faculty of Education in 1945. What LaZerte wanted to do, and what he succeeded in doing

> eventually although it took some time, was to bring all teachers into training in the Faculty. However, the Faculty had to make adjustments: because of the great shortage of teachers during and following the War, they had to continue almost with the kind of program that the normal schools had had, the one-year training which they were able eventually to modify (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

The War years, then, had affected teachers personally and professionally and had resulted in problems in education which had to be dealt with in the fifties and sixties. The condition of schools required an ambitious school-building program. A continuing shortage of teachers, especially of highly qualified teachers, made teacher training an important issue.

THE POST-WAR YEARS

Background to the Post-War Years

The motif of egalitarianism--expressed in phrases such as equalization of access to education, the right to education, the improvement of education for all Albertans--runs through the post-war educational developments. It is not a new theme in Alberta: the missionaries of the eighteen hundreds educated Indians as well as whites; and the settlers built a school system which educated girls as well as boys. In the years after the War, the background for the theme was a dark one: multiplying numbers of children, deteriorating and overcrowded schools, a grave shortage of teachers, and a paucity of programs. However, during the fifties and the sixties there was progress made toward realization of educational equality. Between 1947 and 1957, the Alberta school population increased by more than fifty percent, from 155,537 to 234,397

(Chalmers, 1967: 129). Industrialization resulting from the Leduc oil discovery helped to increase the numbers: "the rapid immigration which resulted in the quick population growth . . . brought a proportionate increase in the number of children in schools" (Chalmers, 1967: 129). In the years between 1941 and 1961, the native population, largely as a result of improved medical services, also climbed. School boards, having anticipated a depression after the War, did not take action until overcrowded, understaffed schools in all parts of the province became an embarrassment. Of the increased provincial wealth from the oil discovery, three million dollars were made available as loans to school boards for school construction; however, the percentage system which formed the loan basis--fifty percent from the province, fifty to be raised by the board--discriminated against poor boards (Chalmers, 1967: 351). In 1961, the School Foundation Program Plan, which replaced most of the former grants and schemes, provided some alleviation. One major advantage was the financial support received by rural areas, especially Northland School Division; another was its support of the internship program. The Foundation Program was a significant step towards realization of the egalitarian dream.

After Aberhart and prior to the brilliant graduate of The Edmonton Normal School, Anders O. Aalborg, the incumbents of the ministry of education appeared to be a lacklustre group, "educationally undistinguished and more concerned with political than pegagogical success" (Chalmers, 1968: 224). Aalborg, Minister of Education from 1952 to 1962, is an important representative of the movement toward equality in education in the post-war years: "he persuaded his cabinet colleagues to accept as

government policy that every child for whom the province of Alberta is responsible should have the right to attend a public school of good minimum standard, and this regardless of the tax resources of the area affected" (Chalmers, 1967: 271).

The idea of the composite school had originated in 1935 with Western Canada Composite High School in Calgary. "The concept of a single high school for all students . . . seemed particularly appropriate to the egalitarian ethos of the Foothills Province" (Chalmers, 1967: 213). However, the composite schools from 1935 to 1960 were composite in name rather than in reality, catering more successfully to academic and some business students than to technical vocational students. The Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act and its concomitant building grants brought into being the large composite schools and the varied technical vocational programs. The federal aid bolstered Northland School Division which built schools at Grouard, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McMurray, and Desmerais (Chalmers, 1967: 213-217).

Considerable effort also went into the attempt to provide more teachers and to improve the quality of teachers. The internship program and the political activity of The Better Education Association in Edmonton were two such attempts to offer a better education for all children.

The educational developments of the years following the War were generally conducted in an atmosphere of optimism and progress and culminated in the sixties during which the public support of education was enthusiastic and generous.

Working to Improve Education

Following the War, Rieger was teaching in Picture Butte. At this time, he became directly involved in The Alberta Teachers' Association. He had joined the Association in his first year of teaching and had later participated in its activities in Berwyn. From 1959 to 1962, Rieger held a number of positions at the local level. In 1963, he was elected President of the Association, serving as Past President the following year. From 1966 until his retirement in 1973, Rieger worked for the Association in the area of teacher education and certification. During those years, he was involved in research studies to improve the quality of instruction in the schools. The studies investigated such problems as teacher work loads, class size, and educational finance, including the effect of the Foundation Program on improving school programs. Rieger's efforts were, also, especially directed toward improving the qualifications of teachers. He advocated the idea of internship as a regular part of teacher training; and, as a result, he supported the two-month internship program developed in the sixties.

Rieger's comments on the Northland School Division are particularly interesting in view of what he believes has happened to the egalitarian theme subsequent to Aalborg's time.

> Anders Aalborg, Minister of Education in the Social Credit government, was responsible for the development of the Northland School Division which was an attempt to bring some order into the chaos and vacuum there. This, I believe, was the first serious, large-scale attempt to improve the education of native people. It was an important step on the road to equality of educational opportunity for all Albertans. This principle seems to be neglected in the seventies (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

In Rieger's remarks upon the Foundation Program, it is illuminating to note that the program now appears to suffer from the same disadvantages existent in the grant systems which it replaced.

> The Foundation Program, developed about fifteen years ago did go a long way towards overcoming educational inequalities in the poorer parts of the province. Foundation Program money now, however, covers only about seventy percent of the total cost of education while the other thirty percent has to be made up locally; so the remote and less wealthy places are at a disadvantage again (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Rieger focuses upon the importance of the internship program as a way of combating the teacher shortage of the post-war years as well as upon its attempt to improve the quality of instruction.

> Of some significance in the sixties was the idea of internship. A teacher who had finished university and had a certificate could in May and June serve an internship in a co-operating school. I'm not sure how it got started: I know at least four or five different superintendents who invented it. They saw it as an excellent recruitment device: "We'll give you a job in September, but not only that, we'll give you a job right now." I think the standard emolument was about five dollars a day. The significant thing was not so much the recruitment aspect but that many principals, teachers, and superintendents recognized it as a means of improving the competence of beginning teachers. The government put some money into internship. The A.T.A. also encouraged the internship program by means of seminars to prepare the co-operating teachers and the interns. The program lasted till the seventies when, with the abundance of teachers that occurred, we had more teachers than jobs. However, the program gave impetus to the idea of an internship as part of the regular requirement for certification (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

After her return to civilian life, Lynass has dedicated herself to learning and to teaching. She attended The University of Alberta from 1946 to 1948, after which she was involved with University High School. In 1949 and 1950, she attended The University of Buffalo, travelling, as well, to Scotland for further research. In 1952, after a year of teaching in Manitoba, Lynass returned to Alberta and taught for five years in Calgary. From 1957 to 1972, Lynass taught in University High School and in Bonnie Doon, Strathcona, Harry Ainlay, and McNally Composite High Schools. In 1972, she transferred to her present school, Queen Elizabeth Composite High School. Lynass attended The University of Alberta in 1962; in the years since 1964, she has taken innumerable summer courses in Alberta and elsewhere.

Lynass provides a vivid account of a situation she encountered in Alberta following the War when she taught in a school in which there had not been a qualified teacher for several years. She also comments on the effect of the War on the schools of the fifties.

> There were areas in this province in 1948 where students who would be as far along as grade six had never had a really qualified teacher. The Second World War had taken so many of the teachers out of the classroom and into other jobs that Alberta had instituted a babysitting system in which a capable student or a parent would have students complete assignments from the Correspondence Branch. There were also teachers who had been certificated after six weeks of training.
>
> I taught in one of those schools, near Barrhead, during the months of May, June, July and August in 1948. The parents were delighted to have a teacher. It must have been a very difficult time for everyone. I don't know how badly those students suffered. I can speak only of the school I was in.

> One little girl had a very bad speech impediment, the worst stuttering I have ever heard. I placed her in a poetry group where we all recited together, and she was doing just fine at the end of two months. I was given such credit; but I think it was, like every reaction, partly over-rated because I was the first teacher who had been in that school for years.
>
> Many of those students became teachers in the sixties, and that's maybe one of the problems we're facing in teaching right now. Then came the fifties where we had the "birth fall-out." The primary grades were so overcrowded, the teacher shortage so great that we were comparable to the carpenter--if you could hold a hammer, they'd hire you--only with the teachers, it was a grade-twelve certificate. The War had tremendous effects on everything that has happened since; science benefitted, but humanity suffered; and we're reaping many of the problems now (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

Buxton, in the fifties and sixties, was not only teaching at The University of Alberta, but he was also involved in making a contribution to improve education by producing a series of impressive textbooks still used in high school English classes across the province: Creative Living Book Five, Guidebook for Teachers of English, Guide to Modern English, Points of View, and Prose for Discussion. Since then, in collaboration with Dr. James Bell (from The University of Alberta), Buxton has produced yet another series consisting of three anthologies designed for use in junior high school along with a teacher's guidebook for each text: Experiences (grade seven), Explorations (grade eight), and Reflections (grade nine). In the sixties, Buxton also served on The Edmonton Public School Board. He held office from 1963 to 1966, and was Chairman from 1967 to 1968. From his experience with the Board, Buxton

is able to give insight into the activities of the Board as well as into public attitudes toward education during the sixties. He begins his observations by commenting on the reaction of school boards to the federal government involvement in vocational education.

> Following the War, we were short of all kinds of tradesmen; and it was accepted then that we'd better build composite schools to provide all kinds of vocational education. During the late fifties, the federal government put five hundred million dollars into the building of vocational schools. School boards reacted by reaching for the money just as people would run up to the bar when somebody says the drinks are on the house. The feeling was that this was free money, and we built the vocational schools.
>
> I spent five years on The Edmonton Public School Board during the sixties, from '63 to '68 and ran for election as a member of The Better Education Association slate of candidates. The B.E.A. started out as a movement opposed to a board that had been rather concerned with reducing taxes and budgets. We of The Better Education Association went out and said to the public, "We want better schools, we want better-qualified teachers, and we want better libraries and equipment. We think you're prepared to pay for them." This was our platform.
>
> Our contribution there as a group was to continually emphasize the need for better-qualified teachers, second year, third year, and degrees, if possible. We did quite a bit toward developing better libraries in the schools. Each time the administration brought in a budget, we doubled the library grant. I still recall the superintendent and the assistant-superintendent the first year that they brought in the budget. We said, "Well, there isn't enough here. You need more for equipment."
>
> When we went out for coffee after our discussions, they said, "This is the first time we were ever aware that a

board would increase a budget rather than decrease it!"

We were in good times for education. There was a belief at that time that education was good business and that money spent in education was well worth spending. At that time, we had no problem with the public. They seemed to be prepared to support us (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The province in 1969 was very different from the Alberta of 1909 to which Rieger's father and mother had come. The changes which occurred in these sixty years can be seen even more clearly if the perspective is shifted farther back. For centuries prior to 1754, Alberta's inhabitants, as far as it is known, had pursued a nomadic life as changing and as changeless as the seasons. The history of Alberta's first peoples has lain submerged until very recently in the shrouds of time; their presence, especially in education, since 1754 has been overshadowed by the events accompanying the settlement of the west. Although the first century and a half after Henday's arrival is a story of manifest change, the record from the early 1900's to the present is enough to eclipse the earlier period. The developments since 1935 have been particularly dramatic.

Education in early Alberta was reflective of and conducted within the framework of the small community which, poor, primitive, and parochial by current standards, valued family life, community participation, and hard work. Its four-by-four unit of educational administration, within which it exercised intimate local involvement in education, was overseen by the central authority, The Department of Education. Chartered by

the provincial autonomy in education granted by the terms of The British North America Act, the central authority had far-reaching power to set a uniform curriculum and to enforce it not only by its examinations but also through its inspectoral staff. To some degree, of course, its authority was offset by rural conditions such as poor roads which made inspection difficult or erratic. Universal education was still a dream. A grade-eight education was considered a significant accomplishment. The few who graduated from high school had been academically educated.

As societal changes occurred, the educational system changed to accommodate. Small farms became large farms. The population shifted from rural to urban. Poverty and isolation gave way to affluence and technology. Correspondingly, the small schools became large composite schools whose population might be four times that of the rural community, seventy times that of the one-room school: munificently endowed by federal monies, they bristled with an arsenal of sophisticated gadgetry and offered a plethora of technical, vocational, academic, and non-academic programs. Shanks' mare, Bennett-Buggies, ponies, and bicycles gave way to flotillas of yellow buses and student-owned automobiles. Not only in the schools themselves but elsewhere the changes found expression in the physical size, number, and equipment of buildings devoted to educational enterprise: the universities, junior colleges, Barnett House, the several office buildings required to house The Department of Education. Additionally, the small units of administration became larger, and provincial authority in curriculum and instruction weakened as inspectors became superintendents and consultants, as large local boards gained autonomy, and as the departmental examinations were abolished.

A diversified educational program was available in large, well-equipped schools for increasing numbers of students. A start was made to extend educational opportunity to Indians. Teachers were encouraged to strive for better qualifications. The move toward universal education with more students staying longer in schools was well under way, and the educational climate in the sixties was favourable. The institutions, values, and practices of rural Alberta were left to live in the memories of people now caught up in the intricacies of an urban, affluent, technological society.

CHAPTER III

ALBERTA EDUCATORS: A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Alberta's recent past is a frontier past, its settlement bringing colourful people, some whose vision and dedication have become legendary and others who have, perhaps, been overshadowed by the outstanding but who are yet deserving of mention. Lynass' comment is pertinent here.

> In any frontier country, there is the opportunity to lead and to have freedom, both of which attracted people like M.E. LaZerte. There are certain people who will go where the field is open; that is, they are a pioneer breed. They came to Alberta from everywhere. They were not necessarily looking for a profit for themselves. We should underestimate neither the remittance man from England nor the itinerant preacher who wandered the frontiers (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

There has been no dearth of people in the west who have sought to embody their visions in institutions, in legislation, and in actual practice. There were the early missionaries who hoped to inspire natives and whites alike with Christian ideals. There were people such as Haultain and Goggin who came later with a brusque secularism according to which "an educational system having its policies and decisions based solely on church requirements would henceforth be regarded as an anachronism" (Patterson, Chalmers, and Friesen, 1974: 172). Not only did missionaries and educators come to pursue their dreams but the settlers came as well

with their hopes of a better world for themselves and for their children--dreams and hopes which resulted in the familiar institutions and practices of the rural community and its schools.

The years from 1920 to 1945 seem filled with men of uncommon vision: Perren Baker, William Aberhart, G. Fred McNally, Hubert Newland, John Walker Barnett, and Milton Ezra LaZerte. Most of them have received some degree of recognition, although there is some danger that their record may be forgotten or ignored. In addition, there are many people, often associated with the famous figures, whose contributions are significant but not as widely known as, perhaps, they should be. Buxton, Rieger, and Lynass knew many of the recognized educators as well as a large number who are less well known. All three not only provide valuable information but also help to preserve the memory of impressive achievement. Some of the achievement was political, involving the work of Baker, Aberhart, and McNally; some was progressive and professional, including Newland, Barnett, and LaZerte; some was in The University of Alberta; and some came from a wide variety of people.

POLITICAL EDUCATORS

Perren Baker and The Large Unit

One of the revolutionary new directions in Alberta education was the change from the small unit of administration characteristic of the one-room school to the large unit. Three men, Perren Baker, William Aberhart, and G. Fred McNally have an interesting share in the idea which made the larger schools possible. Aberhart and McNally have generally received credit for the idea, but Baker should also be recognized.

Perren Baker's vision of the large unit of administration to replace the small school districts, which he regarded as obsolete and as inequitable, did not become a reality until another Minister of Education in another government was able to transform the educational landscape. Baker's contribution has been obscured by the opposition from his own government, by Aberhart's subsequent triumph, and by the antagonism which he engendered in teachers on other educational issues. Baker, however, is not undeserving of mention. It is not often that a political appointee is willing to jeopardize his ministerial position to advance a cause; and yet Perren Baker courted political disaster from as early as 1926 with his advocacy of the large units. In 1928 and again in 1930, Baker's Bill was introduced and defeated, his government with its majority of rural farmers balking at a measure which would result in loss or curtailment of local authority. Baker was successful only in urging his government to establish the experimental Turner Valley School District and the Berry Creek School District projects, forerunners of the large units. Baker's work had to await the coming of the Social Credit government for the first steps toward realization of his goal and for the post-war period for the movement to be totally effected.

William Aberhart, G. Fred McNally, and The Large Unit

When Aberhart came into power, he tackled the large-unit scheme. He and his Deputy-Minister, McNally, enlisted the help of superintendents to hold meetings to gain the views of local board members and of other interested people as well as to promote the idea (Chalmers, 1967: 283-303, 385-387). Aberhart obviously viewed the plan as a necessary step

to bring Alberta education into the twentieth century and to provide a more equitable system of education to minimize the disparity between urban and rural schools. Buxton's anecdote about a meeting he attended, during which the large unit was being promulgated, gives some idea of the reaction at the time.

> Although I didn't know Perren Baker, he was the author of the idea of the large school units. I saw a superintendent by the name of Scottie Gibson talk to various meetings out in Waskatenau and Radway when the unit was being contemplated, telling them that the idea was to bring many school districts into one large unit with a board supervising the large unit. In that way, they believed they could provide a better education. They could bring schools together, and this was the beginning of the larger schools as well as the larger unit. Gibson received considerable opposition. I can remember the rather fractious meeting that I attended in which a good many people were staunchly opposed to the abandoning of the small school areas because boards would thereby lose their authority for the local district. While I had nothing against the small school boards, I'm sure the larger units have done great things for education (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Interestingly, there is evidence to suggest that McNally was not entirely convinced of the large-unit scheme which is considered a most important advance in Alberta education. Buxton refers to McNally's views and gives a description of McNally's personality.

> I knew G. Fred McNally more outside of education than inside. I'm not sure that McNally supported the large unit. He had something to do with putting the large unit in, but I think he did so more as a result of pressures than from his own conviction. I don't think that McNally was very enthusiastic about LaZerte and his Faculty of Education either, quite frankly. I know that he had misgivings about the effectiveness

of the Faculty during its first years. Many people, however, had the same kinds of misgivings: the Faculty has had its various kinds of reputation.

McNally was, however, a very genial person with an attractive personality who seemed to enjoy his work as Deputy-Minister and later as Chancellor of the University very much. I used to attend the meetings of his organization, Knights of the Cross, which were held in the South Side Library. I rather enjoyed this Sunday-school class, if you like, for adults and for young men. I considered him a friend, and I think we got along well. He was Chancellor when I finished my B.Ed. and came up here for graduation. I remember going up to receive my degree, the great smile that he gave at finding I was among the graduates, and the congratulations he gave me. He was always pleasant (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Despite opposition and whatever private misgivings of the Deputy-Minister, the large unit legislation was passed; and the country schools of early Alberta were destined to disappear. Through the efforts of Baker, Aberhart, and McNally, the comprehensive education movement, with its emphasis on large schools and a variety of programs, was given impetus.

PROGRESSIVES AND PROFESSIONALS

H.C. Newland: Enterprise and Teacher Organizations

Newland, Barnett, and Lazerte, whose contributions are well known, devoted their prodigious talents to the improvement of education upon progressive and professional lines. Buxton, Lynass, and Rieger are able to provide considerable information about their personalities as well as their ideas and practice.

H.C. Newland was an Alberta educator whose democratic, progressivist vision was to have profound implications for Alberta education. Born in Ontario in 1883, he taught first in Saskatchewan after 1900 and then came to Alberta after graduating from The University of Toronto in 1910. He was a teacher, a principal, a normal-school instructor, a leader in The Alberta Teachers' Alliance, president of The Canadian Teachers' Federation, high-school inspector, Supervisor of Schools for Alberta, and founder of The Education Society of Edmonton as well as of its twin, The Progress Club in Calgary.

Newland's personality was, apparently, rather astringent and forceful. Rieger, who met Newland during a summer school course, describes him as "a very cool, intellectual person, very reasonable and thorough" (Rieger: 2 March, 1977). T.C. Byrne, who greatly admired Newland, concurs with Rieger.

> Newland's approach was that of an intellectual . . . . Newland was rather austere . . . . He was admired, disliked, and feared (McIntosh and Bryce, 1977: 25).

Newland's chief contribution to education was the remodelling of the Alberta elementary school curriculum into the activity or enterprise method of learning. Byrne explains the approach which Newland used.

> Newland set out to reform the provincial school system. He . . . simply told the normal schools to introduce it. Those who opposed him were unsuccessful in their opposition (McIntosh and Bryce, 1977: 24).

The enterprise method has been viewed in various ways. Buxton discovered misinterpretation of progressive philosophy, upon which the method was based, and misapplication of the enterprise system in the schools.

> In 1935, approximately, there was the invasion of American educators who were strongly entrenched in the belief that Dewey and progressive education had the answers. Dewey, Kilpatrick, and the others did contribute the idea of looking at the student as something more than merely a jug to be filled. That they wanted the student to have interesting experiences in the school was good. When we started the enterprise, however, there was much misinterpretation of Dewey's philosophy in the schools. I've seen some strange things happen under the name of enterprise education; for example, farm youngsters making a model farm out of cardboard as their activity when one would think that enterprise education would endeavour to give them an interest out beyond that farm (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Lynass is convinced that enterprise, in itself a good idea, was not tried fairly in Alberta.

> The enterprise was good; but, like everything else we've done in Alberta, we've never given it a really fair try. The problem is we change too quickly. We take things in without thinking them out really clearly and discard them without giving them a fair trial. Dewey knew what he was talking about: a child learns only from the experience he has, and he goes from there. It's considered good, now, that we have total immersion in French; but people criticize the idea of having total immersion in the experience of building a model Indian village. Of course, you make mistakes; but you do a great deal of reading in the process and learn a great deal, which was the intent of enterprise (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Rieger, commenting from the point of view of the rural school teacher, describes the method and observes that the lack of books made it difficult to realize fully the aims of the enterprise approach.

> The idea in enterprise was that we would take a project which was supposed to combine a number of subjects such as writing, reading, art, geography, history, and science. Suppose it was in the geography of Alberta. There would be a certain amount of activity. The kids would make a map, complete with mountains, on a big table, using a mixture of flour, salt, and water. They were to collect material from various sources, but in the one-room school there weren't any sources; so, I don't recall that they collected much written material. They may have collected some geological specimens, pieces of coal, or different kinds of wood (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Newland's progressivism not only changed the curriculum of Alberta schools but can also be seen in his formation of the two private educational organizations whose aims he clearly envisaged as training and preparation to assist superior teachers in the assumption of leadership in education and in society (Patterson, Chalmers, and Friesen, 1974: 289-305). Buxton, who was a member of both organizations, The Education Society of Edmonton and The Progress Club in Calgary, speaks of The Education Society of Edmonton, of which he is still a member, as it was in the early 1940's.

> The Education Society of Edmonton was a society made up of leading educators or people considered leading educators in and around Edmonton who discussed educational problems. There were about thirty of us in the early forties. Each week someone would give a talk on some aspect of education. An interesting thing about that Society as I look back on it now was that fifty percent of its membership were actually classroom teachers: Harold Tanner; Mary Crawford from Victoria Composite; Helen Chalmers, who taught social studies; Miriam Bowman, who taught art; Art Rosborough, a mathematics teacher; Joe Powell; and myself (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

In reflecting upon Newland's contributions, Byrne (McIntosh and Bryce, 1977: 25) hopes these contributions will be remembered.

> Here was a man who . . . introduced reform from the top, upset the whole province with his enterprise program, had everybody going to summer school and forced the normal schools to teach the activity method. I don't know how many people remember the quality of this man's intellect and the strength of his purpose. The tragedy is that his record will disappear.

Byrne's words are a reminder that dedication and energy, if care is not taken to record them, can often be forgotten.

J.W. Barnett: The Alberta Teachers' Association

There is little doubt that the messianic Barnett, who "saw the role of the teacher as Moses leading his people out of the wilderness" (Lynass: 29 March, 1977), became a legend in his own time. Born in England in 1880, John Walker Barnett was not only a teacher but joined and later became a local branch president of The National Union of Teachers from which organization he undoubtedly learned much that would be of use to him when in 1920, nine years after emigrating to Canada, he assumed leadership of The Alberta Teachers' Alliance. The Alliance had been born out of the improbable ashes of The Alberta Education Association, whose leadership was predominantly educational establishment. Barnett, as Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance, started his long trek across the educational wilderness that was Alberta (Patterson, Chalmers, and Friesen, 1974: 340-362). As testimony to his vision, the new Barnett House stands. (The Association built the new house in 1962 when the first Barnett House on 103 Street in Edmonton became too small.)

Buxton's long and detailed account of Barnett tells of his work and of his vision; it also tells of Barnett, the man.

I first met Barnett in 1929, the first fall that I taught, in Lougheed when I had come in from the rural school. Another teacher introduced him to me. We sat down in the poolroom in Lougheed and talked for an hour or more. He told us about his adventures as he travelled back and forth across Alberta trying to secure memberships in the A.T.A. Membership at that time was voluntary. He had some very interesting stories which he told with a sense of humour and lots of laughter. You would have thought that he had been on some very stimulating escapade instead of being involved in this matter of getting members for the A.T.A.

The fees for joining the A.T.A. were six dollars per year which sounds very reasonable, indeed, until you think that the average salary of teachers at that time was about four dollars per day; so he was asking for a full day and a half of salary. Put that in terms of the present salary, and you get a different kind of picture. Barnett had a little arrangement whereby he would ask teachers to try to recruit other teachers. To provide some incentive for this recruitment, he paid each teacher who got another teacher to register two dollars for the six-dollar membership; that is, four dollars went to the A.T.A. and two dollars went to the teacher who did the recruiting, which wasn't a bad stipend in terms of the fact that that was about half a day's teaching pay. This was one of the ways that the A.T.A. was gradually built up (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

In the years following his first encounter with Barnett, Buxton was able to confirm his impressions of the commanding leader of the Alliance.

I heard Barnett address conventions from then on during 1930, '31, '32. He was a powerful, very articulate speaker, largely because he had this commitment. He knew where he wanted to go and was very certain of his goal which helped to make him a most forceful leader. In a way he was messianic,

> I think. Yes, messianic but also with a sense of humour that emerged from time to time. He had barriers to overcome, the greatest one of which was apathy; that is, many teachers couldn't see the value of a province-wide professional organization, especially if this were going to cost them a little bit of money and involve some sacrifice on their part. The U.F.A. government did nothing, so it devolved upon Barnett to provide leadership. To quite a degree, it was a one-person leadership task which Barnett fulfilled well. He had his headquarters first in his home in Edmonton and then in the old Imperial Bank building where he had two rooms and one secretary. This, at the time, was The Alberta Teachers' Alliance (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Buxton gives an account of a meeting with Barnett occasioned by some peculiar circumstances resulting in Buxton's need to appeal to the newly formed Board of Reference.

> I had a very interesting meeting with Barnett. I had taught at Cloverdale for four years, reasonably successfully. Although I had begun with a rather unsatisfactory first report, I discovered and made use of this idea of co-operative learning: I think I was doing quite an effective job, and the public seemed to think so as well. However, the Chairman of the Board had a daughter coming out of normal school who needed a job. Since I had two friends on the Board, I felt reasonably secure until the elections in January when I suddenly found that one of my friends had been eliminated from the Board and replaced by a friend of the Chairman. I heard via the grapevine that quite a few pigs, about fourteen, were involved in this transaction; but I was never sure of this.
>
> In June I received a letter from the Secretary of the Board, Wesley Mathieu, who was also a friend of mine, a very highly educated individual who was farming. The letter

told me that my services were no longer required, but what the Board didn't know was that that was the year that the government, after continuous urging by Barnett, had brought in The Board of Reference to which a teacher could appeal if he thought he was being fired for the wrong reasons or for no reason at all. I went to the Secretary of the Board and said, "Now, I wonder if the Board members would give me a letter of recommendation because schools are scarce. While I can understand that the Chairman's daughter needs a job, I would like a letter of recommendation so that I can get another job."

When the Board was called together, the Chairman said, "Oh, yes, we'll give you a good recommendation. You're a good teacher." The Secretary wrote a very strong recommendation concerning Earl Buxton, and all members of the Board signed it.

When I went to the Imperial Bank building in Edmonton to talk to Barnett, he said, "How can I help you?"

And I said, "Well, I've been fired from my job and I want to appeal to The Board of Reference." I put the letter of recommendation from the Board on his desk. Barnett sat and laughed until his face turned blue because never had a teacher had that strong a case--being fired by a board that gave him a strong recommendation. When he wrote to the Secretary of the Board, he sent out a bunch of legal documents explaining The Board of Reference: that Chairman just about had a fit.

I felt a little bit unwanted, however; so I went into Gibbons to drown my sorrow. In the beer parlour there, I met two fellows. We had a few beers together, and I told them that I had been fired from my board. They said, "Well, our teacher's just quit so if you'd like the job, why we'll go down to Joe MacLean's store, and we'll sign the contract." It was about ten o'clock, the beer parlour had closed, we staggered down to Joe MacLean's store, and we signed the

> contract. And I've said that it took fourteen pigs to fire me and fourteen beers to hire me and that my value as a teacher seemed to be somewhere between fourteen pigs and fourteen beers.
>
> This was Barnett: I mean he simply took this matter up. I had two or three other experiences that required the assistance of Barnett, and each time he was able to solve my problem. I had a great personal respect for him. To me he was not only a leader of the A.T.A., but he was a personal friend, a man whom I liked very much (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

M.E. LaZerte: The Faculty of Education

While Aberhart and McNally were changing the countryside, Newland was upsetting it, and Barnett was engaged in his peregrinations across it, LaZerte, another compleat educator, was teaching in one corner or another of The University of Alberta campus. His aim was to realize university training within an independent faculty for all teachers and a degree for every teacher.

Born in Ontario in 1885, LaZerte devoted eighty years to education. After coming to Alberta in 1910, he was a school teacher, principal, inspector, Director of The School of Education, Principal of The College of Education, and first Dean of The Faculty of Education (Patterson, Chalmers, and Friesen, 1974: 363-385). Rieger describes his impressions of LaZerte at the time that he was Director of the School.

> LaZerte was an extraordinary person. One of the things that struck me, that would have struck anybody, was his decisiveness. He very quickly made up his mind. He was a very brilliant intellectual; and this, with his decisiveness, gave one great confidence in him. He always seemed

very certain; and, as far as I know, he was always right. Another thing about him was that he was a person who had done research, who had written textbooks. He was known right across the country, even then. At that time, we didn't have many such people in Alberta. That made him impressive. LaZerte was also a very good teacher. He didn't lecture like other university professors did; he taught more like a teacher in the schools because he wanted us to learn techniques of teaching that could be useful with children (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Buxton recalls an important occasion when LaZerte, in a significant address to The Education Society of Edmonton, enunciated his vision of education. It is particularly interesting to see from Buxton's later association with LaZerte at the demonstration school and then on The Edmonton Public School Board, how LaZerte translated commitment into action.

LaZerte I first met a little later. He came out with Barnett to Radway where I was teaching, and the two of them spoke to our A.T.A. local there. My next meeting with LaZerte occurred when I became a member of The Education Society of Edmonton after I had joined the Edmonton staff. About 1944, I heard him address The Education Society on his vision of the teaching profession: teachers would be trained at The Faculty of Education which would be part of the University. He made a very vehement claim that teaching would never be a profession as long as teachers were trained for one year in normal schools whereas all other professionals were university graduates. He wanted all teachers to be university graduates. He made a very strong defence of this thesis to The Education Society where he received good support. He had also, however, some opposition from the instructors of the normal schools who felt their jobs were being jeopardized. His response to that opposition later was to bring all normal-school instructors

into the first Faculty of Education when it was formed in 1945 (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

LaZerte was a pioneer in creating The Faculty of Education. Up until his time, elementary teachers were trained in normal schools while secondary teachers usually got a B.A. Degree in addition to normal school or The College of Education. LaZerte believed that all teachers should have a university degree. In 1945, LaZerte absorbed the normal schools in the Faculty, the normal-school instructors became associate professors, and gradually others were added. This was the beginning of The Faculty of Education and of four-year certification (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

The demonstration school was created by LaZerte as part of The Faculty of Education and as a realization of his conviction that observation of excellent teachers in action in the classroom and supervised practice teaching were essential in the preparation of teachers. Buxton describes the informal nature of the program.

> The University demonstration school, housed in Corbett Hall, was a part of this whole creation. There was one class each of grades one to nine and two classes each of grades ten to twelve. Classes were limited to thirty-five students. It was rather an informal, sometimes chaotic, program while I was there. In their spare periods, students who were interested in English would come in, sit in the row of chairs at the back of the room, and watch me teach English. I never knew whether I would have three or thirty at the back. Later, they'd meet me in the hall and say, "I have to teach so many lessons in English. Would you assign me some lessons?" Although it was rather informal, it was enjoyable. We had good classes and a good staff there (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

As a student in The Faculty of Education, Lynass had the opportunity, as had Rieger, to observe LaZerte in action. Like Rieger and

Buxton, she pays tribute to his vision and leadership.

> In Alberta education, you have to start with Dr. LaZerte, and no matter what you said you couldn't find the right words to describe him: he is a giant among several giants (Lynass: 29 March, 1977). Dr. LaZerte knew all of us. He had a concept of education that was inspiring and a concept of the teacher's role in society that would make anyone proud to be a teacher. When he would speak about the ideals of the teacher and his role in leadership, Dr. LaZerte used to suggest to us that perhaps our role was to stir up trouble rather than to get into a rut. He would suggest that we should be asking questions about society, about where we were going, and the value of what we were doing. He didn't seem to feel that we should leave it to society to ask but that we should be out there leading (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

The word retirement is not apt in describing LaZerte's activities after sixty-five. His second career included a deanship at The University of Manitoba, a commissionership in Prince Edward Island, and a research directorship on the national level. He was also an alderman and a school trustee in Edmonton (Patterson, Chalmers, and Friesen, 1974: 363-385). Buxton was a member of The Edmonton Public School Board at the same time as LaZerte and describes him as he appeared then.

> Later, LaZerte and I were closely associated for five years on the school board. LaZerte was almost eighty then but wouldn't let anybody know it. He was at one with the rest of us in this matter of better-qualified teachers, better-equipped schools, and better status for teachers in the schools. When I first joined the board, we elected him Chairman, and his eighty years were no barrier to his crisp and efficient conduct of our meetings (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Barnett and LaZerte, two of the men whose ideas and energy contributed immensely to professionalism in Alberta education, are compared by Buxton. His words are an appropriate assessment of their achievement.

> Two men who made the lives of teachers better and improved the profession, were the ones I knew best, Barnett and LaZerte. They were contemporaries, each one working indefatigably toward the realization of a dream or a vision that they were very certain would revolutionize education by making teachers members of a highly respected profession instead of isolated individuals, working alone, actually separated from other professions and with far less status and prestige than other professions. (I think this isolation and lack of status have been characteristics of teaching throughout the ages; for example, the Greek teachers were pedagogues, a word which came to have its own kind of derogatory connotation.) Each was dedicated toward the achievement of his goal. A great part of their lives and their thinking was concentrated upon that dedication. I could sense it as soon as I talked to them (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

Teachers in The Faculty of Education

In addition to figures such as Baker, Aberhart, McNally, Newland, and LaZerte, there have been other educators about whose aims and work comparatively little has been written. Many of these educators were associated with The University of Alberta, either in The Faculty of Education or in The Faculty of Arts and Science; others made contributions to education outside of the University. Lynass, Buxton, and Rieger came

into contact with many of these men and women and are able to speak of their achievements.

Lynass describes her view of The Faculty of Education as a whole in her comments on the staff which LaZerte had assembled. She refers to specific professors whose conviction that teachers were leaders and that there was joy in learning impressed her.

> It wasn't Dr. LaZerte alone: he was a great leader, but he was equally fortunate to have Miss Simpson, Dr. Smith, Mr. Coutts, Dr. Gillies, Mr. Buxton, and Dr. Sparby whose concepts of the role of education were also inspiring. They would remind us that once you taught a student to read, he was in the same position as we were where he could find out for himself. They used to insist that there was a joy in learning and that we must create a situation where the student could discover that joy. Dr. Smith was absolutely great. I recall one incident where a student-teacher, an agriculture graduate, objected because I had asked him to teach a lesson in English. I told him his job was to get busy and learn the material. Dr. Smith reminded me that no matter how true that statement might be, it wasn't very diplomatic. There was a better method of getting results. Dr. Smith was a psychologist of the most sincere type, but first of all he was a human being. I recall so many times when he would say to me, "You certainly know your English, but there are other things as important as the subject matter." And he was right.
>
> These men in The Faculty of Education wanted us to have a wide and deep knowledge of our subject matter and also of a philosophy of education that challenged the whole concept of the student's right in the classroom as well as our own rights. The student had a right to be taught, and they never let us forget it. Dr. Gillies would talk about Madame Montessori and Demiashkevich as well as Locke, Hume, and the other famous philosophers. They talked about the people

> who worked in the classroom so that it wasn't all theory; that is, Rousseau had his place in our education, but so did Madame Montessori. They were great teachers (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

To illustrate her contention that LaZerte and his staff were inspiring, Lynass relates a classroom anecdote about Coutts who, like Gillies, believed in the importance of the teacher's responsibility in instruction and evaluation.

> Coutts one time was asked if a student didn't pass an exam what did you do about it. Coutts said, "You re-teach it."
>
> "And suppose he doesn't get it the second time?"
>
> Coutts said, "Re-teach it, but this time examine what you're doing."
>
> And some wit in the class said, "But suppose you re-teach it ninety times?"
>
> "Well," he said, "teach it ninety-one, but this time make sure you teach it." Coutts and Gillies both always stressed that any time you teach something to remember that the examination examines the teaching as much as the child's knowledge (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Lynass' experience with LaZerte's demonstration school led her to accord respect to the members of that staff as well as to the members of the Faculty.

> Not only were the professors impressive, but the teachers who taught in the University High were also exemplary. When I joined them, I joined a group of people that it would be impossible to speak highly enough about. Murray McDonald was not only an intellectual, but he was a gentleman. And Cy Hampson? Where could you find anyone as a better representative of what a school teacher should be? (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Like Lynass, Buxton remembers the work of Smith and Coutts in The Faculty of Education.

> Herb Smith took over as Dean after LaZerte. While LaZerte had been moving in this direction, Herb Smith did much more to departmentalize the Faculty by creating the various departments so that the work was delegated. Smith also put Dr. Coutts in charge of the student-teaching program. After this delegation of authority that took place, the Faculty gradually bloomed and blossomed (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Buxton's long professional and personal association with Coutts began with the two men working closely together with students and student-teachers in the University demonstration school. Buxton thinks highly of Coutts' leadership in education.

> I first became acquainted with Herbert Coutts in 1945 when he taught a senior class, mostly veterans, in English Curriculum and Instruction (methods), and I was teaching English to grades eleven and twelve in the University demonstration school. At his suggestion, we decided to pool our efforts and resources. I would teach my grade-twelve students a lesson on Macbeth or on style analysis while his student-teachers observed the lesson. Then I'd meet with Coutts and his class to discuss the methods I had used. I admit that I couldn't always answer his students' questions because I hadn't always developed a rationale for some of the things I did. I think that sometimes I was merely an opportunist, using my students' questions and contributions as bases for exploration.
>
> In another period we'd repeat the process with Coutts teaching my class. I looked forward to each of these demonstrations because I found them challenging, and I usually learned something from Coutts that I could use later. For example, before I saw him in action, I hadn't thought of throwing student compositions on a screen with

an opaque projector and having them criticize each other's work. Since each composition was identified by a number rather than a name, the writers did not need to feel uncomfortable. With one batch of descriptive paragraphs, Coutts included a hand-written copy of a paragraph by Dickens about a house "leaning over" a road. The students dutifully criticized the paragraph and did not appear embarrassed when Coutts identified the writer. Perhaps they felt that they had discovered that even Homer nods. I think that this kind of co-operative enterprise would be valuable to Education professors, to teachers, and to Education students (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Buxton speaks of Coutts' dedication and hard work in meeting the problems associated with the Faculty as well as of the other duties which he assumed.

Herb Coutts is a good man, a sincere man, a man who was dedicated to improving the Faculty. For years he carried many responsibilities. For one thing, he acted as assessor of qualifications for The Alberta Teachers' Association. In addition to the administration of a rapidly growing Faculty, he had the task of evaluating the qualifications of people who came with a variety of records from all sorts of schools in other parts of Canada and from outside the country. He was an extremely busy man during those years, usually arriving at his office early in the morning and frequently returning to work during the evening.

In addition to providing good leadership for the Faculty, Coutts worked with Stanley Clarke of the A.T.A. in urging the provincial government to increase the years of training for teachers until the four-year Bachelor of Education became a reality. Coutts was also responsible for the construction of a new Education Building so that The Faculty of Education could move from Corbett Hall to the central part of the University Campus.

> When I served as Master of Ceremonies at Coutts' retirement banquet in the Chateau Lacombe a few years ago, I let other speakers tell of these and other achievements. I confined my remarks to describing the hospitality of Herb and Clara Coutts. I doubt that there are any members of his large Faculty who have not at some time been guests at the Coutts' attractive home in Grandview Heights (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Another educator who became a member of the Faculty was Wilf Pilkington. Both Lynass and Buxton know and admire him. Lynass, at the time, enjoyed a dual relationship with Pilkington who was a neighbour and an estimable colleague.

> I lived next door to Mr. Pilkington for years, one of the most inspiring educators I've ever talked to. Always, before I prepared my work for September, I would talk to him. He would have so many anecdotes and ideas that I could plan to capture my class on borrowed material. I could express opinions to Mr. Pilkington without fear of ridicule, and I could get into arguments with him where it was an exchange of ideas not an exchange of grievances (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Like Lynass, Buxton speaks highly of Pilkington and his abilities as teacher, administrator, and public speaker.

> Very shortly after I joined the Edmonton Faculty in 1956, Coutts appointed Wilfred Pilkington as his assistant in charge of student programs. Pilk, who had been an excellent teacher and professor, proved to be a very effective administrator in this area. He developed an excellent relationship with students because he was responsive to their problems. When he had to say "No" to a student, he could do it graciously. He used to call me occasionally when he had a student from outside Canada who was having difficulty with English. We'd

> give our own little tests to discover whether the individual was proficient enough in English to enter the Faculty and become a teacher. Sometimes we'd have to say, "Look, we think you should spend a year in Canada just doing something else and improving your proficiency in English." Pilkington's handling of students was always on a friendly, personal basis. He was also a witty, entertaining speaker who combined humour and information at numerous teachers' conventions and meetings.

Teachers in The Faculty of Arts and Science

Students of The Faculty of Education have occasion to meet members of The Faculty of Arts and Science since part of the preparation of a teacher is mastery of his subject. Like Rieger, who in his first year of university had been impressed by professors in The Faculty of Arts and Science, Lynass and Buxton also encountered knowledgeable and memorable professors of that Faculty. Lynass reflects upon several whose scholarship and ability to teach she considers outstanding.

> I couldn't speak highly enough of the people I met in Education, but I also met tremendous people in The Faculty of Arts. Our philosophy prof. was amazing--Mardiros. Where would you find a more tolerant and educated mind than Mardiros'? L.G. Thomas is one of the most underrated men I've ever known. I learned how to approach history from him. You had to listen attentively to him because he had such quiet humour that you'd miss it if you didn't pay attention. I used to come out of his classes tired out! I had listened so intently that even the backs of my legs would be tired. Dr. Forrest, Dr. Wonders, and Dr. McCalla. Dr. Forrest is a great scholar whose special field is Milton. I would go into his class so well prepared. He would give his lecture, and I would spend the next hour trying to figure out why I hadn't agreed with

him when I had come in. I found him one of the most encouraging persons I had ever worked with. Dr. Wonders. Even the stones would listen to Dr. Wonders, he had so many fascinating ideas. He taught human geography. Dr. McCalla could inspire a person to go out and do more than he ever dreamed he could do. All of these people I speak of in both Faculties had knowledge and wide experience in the classroom, and maybe that's what made all the difference (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

As a student struggling to obtain his undergraduate degree, Buxton encountered two well-known and highly respected members of The Faculty of Arts and Science, Dr. Broadus and Dr. Salter. In his tribute to these two men, Buxton emphasizes their scholarship and their ability to infect students with enthusiasm for the subject.

Dr. Broadus taught English 2, which is now English 200. He had a class in Med. 142, with about two hundred and fifty students; and he taught us the story of English literature. His book is still considered quite a classic on the story of English literature. He brought English literature to life in terms of the society. He'd talk, for example, about the kind of society and the conversations they would have in the coffee houses in London as background to Addison, Steele, and The Spectator. He'd talk about life in the eighteenth century when Pope wrote "The Rape of the Lock," being satirical of the young lady, Arabella. What happened with Broadus was that literature, the people, came to life, the times came to life; and I think that had an influence on me later in terms of teaching. Broadus taught that literature, after all, is not necessarily an accurate picture of society but is related to society, to human beings and their thoughts, their dreams, their ideals. From Broadus, I got the concept that literature was man, his motives, ideals, dreams, and visions.

> I took two courses from Dr. Salter; and, like Dr. Broadus, he was enthusiastic about his subject. He was a scholar. He could read literature so that it revealed the feelings of the speaker: the words came to life on the page. Many people have said he was a tyrant, but I never found him that way. I enjoyed him, and I enjoyed the two courses I took with him. One was a Shakespeare course; the other was a writing course. He made demands. We did all thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays in the summer session, which meant going through them fairly quickly. He asked for a lot of reading ahead of time. At that time we used to prepare for the summer session in advance. I found him a person who was so interested in his field that he wanted discipline, effort, and industry from students. When that happened, he seemed to be content. He was a hard worker himself (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

On another occasion, Buxton took a writing course from Dr. Salter. Buxton's description of Salter's expectations of his students and of himself is a clear evocation of the redoubtable scholar.

> Later, I took a writing course from him. At the first session, there were twenty students in the class. Salter said, "You people say you want to write. All right, you'll write. You'll write three thousand words every week, I'll correct those three thousand words, I'll write some scathing remarks on your papers, and if you're going to be in this course,"--this may be why people have the impression he was a tyrant--"you're going to work." When we went back for the second session, the twenty had become twelve. He said, "Now, we can go to work." We did write a paper of about three thousand words, sometimes less, every week; but then, in responding, he would sometimes write almost as much as the student had. I wrote one paper which I called "The Old Morality Shop," in which I was being satirical about all the old selections we used to use to make students industrious

and moral, like "The Ant and The Cricket," "Peter and the Dike," "George Washington and the Cherry Tree," and "The Shoemaker and the Elves." Salter responded with about three pages, saying he was extremely interested and that he often had wondered and been interested in finding out just how much impact this kind of literature had on students (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

OTHER EDUCATORS

Garrison, Clarke and Swift

Rieger and Lynass turn their attention outside of the University to provide a list of impressive educators whose interests and contributions are far ranging. Rieger mentions three educators whom he found impressive in three different positions: Lloyd Garrison, a principal and an active member of The Alberta Teachers' Association; Stanley Clarke, at the time the head of The Alberta Teachers' Association; and Dr. W.H. Swift, Deputy-Minister.

> Lloyd Garrison became a teacher when he was fairly mature, thirty years old. He had gone to The School of Education. In 1932, he went to Berwyn as principal of the rural high school there; and it was in 1939 that I came along. I was there for two years. Garrison remained in that school until the early sixties when he retired. He was never in any other school, which is an interesting thing in itself. He had had a lot of experiences and was a great story-teller. A good talker, he'd go down to the general store in the village of Berwyn after school. He was a member of the Hot-Stove Group there, and they would go over war-time strategy. His interest was social studies.

Prior to Lloyd Garrison's retirement in 1962, the school in Berwyn was named after him. He was also honoured by The Alberta Teachers' Association. The ATA Magazine (May, 1963: 54-55), "Honorary Memberships," reported the bestowal of the award.

> In grateful recognition of a lifetime of distinguished teaching service in the classrooms of schools in this province, it pleases the Executive Council of The Alberta Teachers' Association to confer on . . . Lloyd Garrison honourary membership in the Association.

As well as recognizing Garrison's contributions to education, Rieger gives insight into Clarke and Swift, two prominent Alberta educators.

> Stanley Clarke became Executive-Secretary of The Alberta Teachers' Association while I was on the Executive Council. He was a person whose background was quite a bit different from that of members of Executive Council and A.T.A. staff. He had had experience in university, had a background of theory and history of education that teachers generally don't have. He also had a systematic way of tackling problems which impressed me (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).
>
> Dr. W.H. Swift was Deputy-Minister for about twenty years. What I recall most about him is that he seemed to be a very fair-minded person. At meetings of the representatives of the trustees, the A.T.A., and the Department, the A.T.A. and the A.S.T.A. often had opposing views on questions; but Swift was often able to get us together, to find something constructive in the views of each of us that was useful. Another thing which impressed me about him was that he undoubtedly understood and was able to interpret The School Act better than anybody else in the province (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Dickie, Ronning, Gislason, Ainlay, Sterling-Haynes, Cameron, and Greenham

Lynass refers to people whose contributions were outside of the University as well and whose work she considers to have been of importance to education: Donalda Dickie, Chester Ronning, Mr. Gislason, Harry Ainlay, Elizabeth Sterling-Haynes, Donald Cameron, and Mrs. Greenham.

Donalda Dickie, along with Olive Fisher and Inspector W.E. Hay, was a member of the sub-committee appointed to draft Newland's activity curriculum. It is, consequently, appropriate that Lynass should have used Dickie's books in her classroom.

> When I started to teach, it was the enterprise system. The children would make clay maps of Alberta. There was a woman, Donalda Dickie, who had written books on place names in Alberta and beautiful little stories like "The Ghost River Dam" and "Qu'Appelle" which I used as part of the enterprise. I suspect that she felt that Canada stopped somewhere around Moosomin, Saskatchewan, because her stories were so full of the place names of Alberta and Saskatchewan as well as of the early pioneers who had contributed to these place names and locations. Children, in those days, using her books were very aware of the history and geography of Alberta. She must have had a tremendous impact on the Albertans of that day and on many of the people from Saskatchewan.

Lynass refers to three Albertans, of whom one achieved international recognition, one little if any, and one a civic (Edmonton) reputation.

> There was The Camrose Lutheran College whose principal, a specialist on China, became an adviser to the government on Oriental affairs. He had operated a private school in Alberta which attracted Central Alberta students and which had a great

influence in Alberta education. Chester Ronning was his name. He became Dr. Ronning, but he was Mr. Ronning when I heard him speak at a teachers' convention in Stettler to a group of us who were so naïve that a travelogue was entertaining. He spoke about China, and the Chinese people became so human and real that no teacher listening could have had anything excepting respect for China and its people with their courage and their hardihood. He spoke of Sun Yat-sen and his revolution and of the Soong (or Sung) sisters. He made the history of China more personal than Pearl Buck does in her books.

There was an English teacher called Mr. Gislason who worked with teachers in such areas as English committees. In a quiet way, he always moved you to do better than you otherwise would have.

Harry Ainlay is something different. He was Mayor of Edmonton when I went to university. I heard him in a debate; if he was as humourous and as clever in the classroom as he was on the stage, he was good.

In concluding her account of notable educators, Lynass explains how she came to meet the people who were responsible for establishing The Banff School of Fine Arts. Her memories of the School are vivid.

There were also Elizabeth Sterling-Haynes, Donald Cameron, and Mrs. Greenham with their work in The Banff School of Fine Arts. Elizabeth Sterling-Haynes could make any bag of salt or tombstone come alive. She could make you feel the drama just on the stage itself. What she did for literature among the young teachers I don't think could be duplicated because although we could read it, teach it, explain it, she showed us how to put people in it. Little plays about Henry the Eighth and farmers instantly became human. There was flesh on them. When she read poetry, she always chose the dramatic poems with people in them. Robert Frost's "The

> Death of the Hired Man" was a genuine experience. And Donald Cameron with his work on that Banff School of Fine Arts. I was in high school when he was stumping the country trying to get us to go there for the summer. When I went there, I met Mrs. Greenham. These people had a vision of making The Banff School of Fine Arts as great as ever Stratford and London were. I think they succeeded. I know that I still get a thrill out of going to the Banff School. When I go to the Greenham Theatre, I remember Mrs. Greenham's production of Hiawatha where the little deer actually did come out of the forest at the right moment, bless them, and the children hid out there on the mountainside. It was wonderful. Alberta must have been full of great and noble educators, and I really think someone should write about these people (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

SUMMARY

These are some of the people, then, considered by Lynass, Rieger, and Buxton to have been significant in education and worthy of mention, people whose activities have ranged from a career devoted to a single school to an absorption with place names in Alberta and Saskatchewan or with Oriental studies. These are some of the people, widely acclaimed or less well known, whose visions have led them to involvement in the betterment of education and who have devoted their time and attention to The Alberta Teachers' Association, The Faculty of Education, The Faculty of Arts and Science, The Banff School of Fine Arts, The Department of Education, The Edmonton Public School Board, The Education Society of Alberta, and The Progress Club, curriculum reform, and the large unit of administration. Whatever the particular area in which they have worked, their energies have been concentrated upon the attempt to

improve education. In their diverse ways, they have not only influenced the course of education in the province but have also had an impact upon teachers such as Lynass, Buxton, and Rieger, with whom they have come into contact.

CHAPTER IV

VIEWS ON CURRENT ISSUES IN ALBERTA EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

What can be described as the present system of education in Alberta has evolved as a result of historical developments and issues, including the ideals of visionaries. Change, which has been a predominant factor in Alberta society, has been reflected in education. As Dr. T.C. Byrne, former Deputy-Minister of Education in Alberta, has pointed out, the school "will always be a conservative institution following rather than leading, moving only in the wake of social change" (McIntosh and Bryce, 1977: 104). It further appears that in the twentieth century change has demonstrated an accelerating tendency: large changes have taken place relatively quickly. The historical perspective, interesting in itself, has provided some understanding of the evolution of current practices, institutions, and issues. However, the present state of education must also be examined within the context of current beliefs, expectations, and trends.

This examination entails the formulation of two closely related questions. The first is what relationships exist between schools and the needs and expectations of society; and the second is what is the nature of schools in the seventies.

The first question includes the degree and method of control the

community wishes to exert over its schools. There is, as well, the tension between what people think the schools should be doing and what they think the schools are doing. Tension also exists when the public and educators disagree in their perceptions of either ideals or reality. Frequently, neither public nor educators speak with a concerted voice upon any educational issues. Inherent in these aspects of the first question is the effect of the tensions upon students and teachers. Closely related, also, is the impact upon schools of the values and practices apparent in the community outside of the schools.

The second question focuses somewhat more specifically upon schools and involves the adjustments schools have made in their attempt to meet the needs and expectations of society. A central concern is how these adjustments affect students and teachers. It includes not only such details as administrative practice but also such considerations as curriculum. Evaluation of programs, of students, of teachers, and ultimately of schools almost inevitably returns the discussion once again to the relationship of schools and society.

Research has sought to provide insight into problems and issues which concern education. The topic of research raises important questions about its procedures, uses, interpretations, and its areas and agents of investigation.

The reflections of John G. Althouse and W.H. Swift, two Canadian educators of some prominence, provide a convenient philosophical framework within which to examine the analyses of the present state of education advanced by Buxton, Rieger, and Lynass. As the three educators query the nature of education, they are often surprisingly in agreement

with the major issues identified by Althouse and Swift. The agreement is surprising in that Althouse was writing in the late forties, Swift in the late fifties, while Buxton, Rieger, and Lynass are speaking in the late seventies.

Althouse's crystalline analysis of structure and aims in Canadian education proceeds from a postulation of two basic countervailing forces in the structure of the educational system. On the one hand, there is "the tendency for the community to regard the school with jealous and proprietary pride," as a result of the "extraordinary degree of self-reliance" exhibited in "early settlements everywhere in this Dominion" (Althouse, 1949: 25). On the other hand, there is a "trend to vest policy-making authority in paid officials of the government" which "in fields like that of education . . . is particularly dangerous" because "it can lead . . . to a complete divorce of education from practical life" (Althouse, 1949: 30-31). Swift (1958: 28) reports that he has observed a "trend toward the lessening of the authority, or at least of the exercised authority, of the central educational body . . . and an increase in the degree to which local school authorities exercise independence of action." In Alberta, since then, the trend has found formal expression in the decision (made in January, 1973) to accredit local boards.

However, in light of current public dissatisfaction with education and in view of the possibility that "it is public opinion which finally determines what is done in the schools" (Swift, 1958: 23), it would be premature to be altogether confident that the danger Althouse refers to has been totally averted. There is the ironic possibility that the

"jealous and proprietary pride" of the community may cause it to call for increased government control and intervention. There is the possibility, also not untinged with irony, that "the complete divorce of education from practical life" has already been effected and that partially by educators who are not government officials. Yet a third possibility is that the community may have abdicated its "jealous and proprietary pride" altogether.

Althouse's observations about community expectations of its schools are trenchant.

> It would be profitable . . . to remember that education is one of the few human activities in which a community gets just about what it deserves. The community which has the interest, the intelligence, and the courage to define its school objectives will usually approximate those objectives. The community which is vague, or muddled, or insincere in setting its school objectives usually derives little but trouble and disappointment from its educational expenditures, no matter how generous these may be . . . . Schools will not be able to implement the most enlightened thinking about their function until the public in general is more generous in its tangible appreciation of what people are, as distinguished from what they possess or what they do for a living (Althouse, 1949: 31, 76).

In terms of the second major question, the nature of schools, again the views of Althouse and Swift are useful. Althouse warns that, in the absence of meaningful goals, "there is a real danger that . . . the school may grope about with more good intent than clear purpose, and that it may either perpetuate traditional practices which are no longer applicable, or invent new procedures with no clear perception of where they may lead" (Althouse, 1949: 37). He evinces concern about the necessity for developing favourable student attitudes.

> These are grim days; we must not shrink from bringing young people to the discovery that everything worth while involves a cost as well as a reward, and that the cost comes first . . . . The high school pupil is to be taught to achieve,

> not to account for failure; he is to be led to exert effort, not to be politely idle or to simulate interest with no real enthusiasm . . . . Self-expression is a necessary step in development, but the school must be quite as much concerned about the kind of "selves" to be expressed as about the opportunities for expressing them (Althouse, 1949: 61).

Swift also identifies as an urgent problem the need to develop in students a favourable and disciplined attitude toward education.

On the issue of evaluation of students, Althouse warns that

> a school which never trusts its pupils to think for themselves or to make their own decisions can usually put on a good "show" at any public function--and I would include external examinations among these public functions (Althouse, 1949: 70).

Swift expresses grave caution about the judgment of schools.

> But the measuring of educational results and the isolation of causes are elusive processes indeed. What about . . . mobility of population . . . working mothers . . . greater prosperity . . . T.V. . . . changing social attitudes? Perhaps one or more of these factors have really had greater influence than actual teaching procedures (Swift, 1958: 60).

Finally, both Althouse and Swift see research as a useful tool in education. Althouse calls for open dissemination of research using plain language and a sense of humour while Swift notes that he detects a growing faith in research as a way of solving educational problems.

As Buxton, Rieger, and Lynass focus upon the schools and their society, different ways of looking at current issues and practice emerge. All three grapple with the problem of societal expectations of the schools. In discussing the nature of schools, they refer to the administrative practices of semestering and streaming which have been instituted in the large schools and to curriculum and evaluation. After considering the matter of research, the three educators turn their attention to what they consider to be a most important issue in education: the judgment of the schools inherent in the back-to-the-basics issue with its allied

questions of literacy, traditional grammar, and external examinations.

SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY

Societal Expectations and Their Impact Upon Schools

Rieger's outline of societal expectations of schools in Alberta proceeds from an historical perspective. He indicates that expectations have not changed radically in Alberta from the early years. Rieger believes that the discrepancy between actual and ideal is a very large one because ideals are high. Although he thinks some progress has been made, in terms of present ideals there is still a long way to go.

> I think it's fair to say that there is and always has been a philosophy of education in Alberta. Let me go back to early years. Most people, including most teachers, in Alberta, thought of education with a Christian bias, regarding it as a supplement to religion. Most people were, and probably still are, or would classify themselves as, Christians. Most people did, and still do, think of education as encouraging and perpetuating democratic forms of government and other aspects of our lives. Most people did, and still do, think of education as furthering the free enterprise, capitalistic view of economics. Most people did, and still do, think that the main purpose of the schools is to teach people to read, write, figure, and get prepared for a job. Most people, also, believe that the school has a responsibility in developing good character traits and social attitudes in pupils. I think that's definitely so. They expect the school to teach the pupils to be diligent, punctual, well-mannered, honest, and courageous. Admittedly, we fall far short; and people know that too (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

The discrepancy between the actual and the ideal is very large because people in education generally have high ideals,

always far ahead of reality. I read some while ago a reference to The Education Act of 1870 in Great Britain. The hope was that most kids would learn to read, write, and do sums. That's just over a hundred years ago and now seems to us a pretty low expectation. Now there are very few young people who don't get twelve years of schooling. No longer are people satisfied with just getting a diploma to prove skills in elementary arithmetic and language.

Society expects the schools to produce some differences in the behaviour of people and some changes in their attitudes. Obviously, we have much to do in this area. We have a long way to go with respect to our attitude towards Indians, East Indians, and people from other parts of the world. We haven't made much advance in our tolerance of French as a second language in this province. We have made some progress in attitudes towards handicapped, crippled, or mentally deficient people who were formerly treated with derision but now tend to be recognized as feeling people who have some possibilities. Maybe we're more tolerant about religious matters (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Rieger comments that parental expectations of children can form an obstacle to progress in education. He concludes by reflecting with gentle irony upon the reaction in the sixties when a societal expectation was achieved by the schools.

We still have problems of attitudes to different educational routes. Most parents want their children to take the matriculation courses because they believe that is the route to a good job, a profession; but many students are not interested in or lack the aptitude for academic education. What they're really interested in may be the technical occupations, but the same financial motivation isn't there in the technical areas.

Another thing about expectations is that success in their achievement may have unexpected consequences. Many people

have said that the schools should teach students to think. I was always aware that when people said that so glibly, they may have been a little reckless because if the kids think very much, they might not think exactly the same as their parents or their teachers or their government. In this country, but more particularly in the United States, about ten to fifteen years ago, when young people who had started to think expressed ideas that were seemingly strange to the establishment, many people were puzzled and shocked. It had been done deliberately, however: people had said they wanted young people to think (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Lynass is convinced that the societal expectation of schools to prepare students for a job is not only wrong but is harmful to students. She adds that there are far too many expectations of the schools and that educators have themselves to blame. Making a crisp delineation between what schools can and should teach and the values which parents expect the schools to teach, she castigates parents for their abdication of responsibility.

> Society is making the wrong demands. Society wants trained not educated people. Students are not going to university to get an education. They're going to get training for a job (Lynass: 16 March, 1977). I am concerned, very concerned, about the student in the classroom who doesn't want to be there and about the demands that society makes of the student who has all the qualifications of citizenship but who hasn't the grade-twelve certificate. He endures, and that's all it is.
>
> As educators we have somehow confused ourselves into thinking that we are the only people who know anything about education. We are trying to educate in far, far too wide fields. There is absolutely nothing in human life that isn't expected to be introduced into the school from family living to the philosophy of the ancients and everything in

between. In our zeal for the discovery method, we've lost sight of what real discovery in education is; often it's nothing more than experience (Lynass: 29 March, 1977). My cry is that public education should be responsible only for teaching every student to read, to write, to calculate, and to be observant of the scientific world up to the end of about grade nine, maybe just grade eight; and I think some of our students would be better employed as pump jockeys or runners than in school (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

'I realize that the parent is the most concerned person in the whole of education because he pays for it, and he places his only genuine product in the hands of the school. Therefore, I respect his right to be concerned and to make demands; but I'd like to know when he is going to do his share of it because he is now asking the school to do everything. If I were an Alberta parent today, I would refuse to have counsellors in the school because I want to counsel my own child. Now, do not misunderstand. I believe that there should be highly trained counsellors in the shopping centres, paid for out of municipal funds so that anybody could drop in; but they'd drop in with their problem on their own time. I would also have a whole area of the police force educated as our school counsellors are. If I were a parent, however, I would make sure that anyone counselling my child had my permission. Religious ethics belong in the home, and I'm not sure moral ethics don't too. I don't believe in ownership of children, but I believe good manners and attitudes related to manners belong in the home. I do not believe in a generation gap. I think parents are themselves to blame if they are experiencing one because they have shunned the opportunity to be parents rather than pals, they have shifted discipline and guidance to the school; and I think they have thrown away the dearest thing they owned (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

Buxton is also concerned with the many demands made of schools. He, too, believes that educators are partially at fault in fostering the idea that schools can do everything.

> Teachers are facing a more challenging and, perhaps, more difficult task; and a major problem is the expectations of society. These expectations were partly created by educators themselves, that is, that schools can do everything for all young people. Enculturation, acculturation, the development of knowledge and of literature, character development, morality, religion, religious values and ethics, equipping young people to live in a democracy, improving their human relationships, sex education, marriage, family life, and vocational preparation--all of these things seem to be expectations of the schools. I wonder whether the expectations aren't unrealistic for several reasons.

Buxton explains the various factors such as time, numbers, student apathy, and the effects of television and affluence upon student motivation which he thinks make societal expectations unrealistic.

> One reason is time. Teachers have students for about eight percent of their time between birth and eighteen; for the other ninety-two percent, the young person is being influenced by parents, siblings, friends, and the attitudes of society and media. This limited time to work with students, in contrast to the tremendous amount of time they spend outside the schools, may make some of the goals more difficult to achieve.
>
> A second problem is numbers. We talk about teaching for individual differences and treating each child as an individual: but if there are thirty students and if the elementary teacher is teaching three hundred minutes per day, he has ten minutes to treat each student as an individual. In high school, where students take several subjects, then each teacher will have a minute or two with each student.

> Teachers report and my observation of some classrooms suggests that many students are more apathetic than they used to be, less prepared to become involved than the students I taught at Cloverdale, Gibbons, Radway, Fort Saskatchewan, and University High. There is more competition for students' time nowadays compared with the forties.
>
> Television has a tremendous impact on students' time. More time is spent by students in front of the tube than they spend in twelve years of school. It has been estimated that the average student spends about fifteen thousand hours in front of a television set. Commercial television is anti-educational from the standpoint that it's designed to sell things, to get people to consume; and its programs are dominated by violence and inanity. Since television is also designed to entertain, the student can very readily get into the habit of thinking the teacher ought to be an entertainer. Teachers may try to become entertainers; but not only haven't they the resources that Bob Hope has, there's quite a difference between entertainment and creating interest, stimulating learning, gaining new skills and insights, facing an intellectual challenge, and feeling a sense of achievement when these have been attained.
>
> The schools face other competition besides television for students' effort and attention. This is an affluent society, a good many students have cars to look after, and they have to get a job after school to buy new tires. I have actually heard teachers trying to give an assignment and the student saying that he didn't have time because he was working after school or going skiing at Jasper (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Buxton highlights some of the destructive forces that can be seen in modern adult society and speculates upon the way in which students react to these forces.

> We've had our Viet Nam War, Cambodia, Angola, and Israel; the widespread corruption in business and government, Watergate just one of many, many examples; the commercials which cry "Consume! Consume!" without regard to the resources being destroyed; materialism, a drive for a better car and more gadgets than the other fellow; a weird system of justice which sends a petty thief to jail and arranges deals with Agnew and Nixon et al. to pay a million dollars for their memoirs and has David Frost interviewing Nixon for another million dollars; labour and professional unions continually demanding more and more money for less work, along with business which wants greater and greater profits all the time; and, since there's money in obscene, profane, and pornographic literature, much of it flooding the market.
>
> As a result, there are two undesirable impacts on students. Some young people accept the values that are portrayed and believe that the things that pay off are getting ahead, even if it involves greed and corruption; not doing any more work than absolutely necessary; and believing that any kind of behaviour is okay as long as one isn't caught. Other young people in the school rebel. Since adult society is all wrong, don't believe anything adults say; have no respect for authority. Parents and teachers talk about the importance of work, study, knowledge; but they're not revealing these attitudes. Consequently, what they say is hypocritical. They're trying to con us. You can see both of these attitudes among students in the schools (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

From his observations of society and its schools, Buxton is left with the uneasy impression of the large school being microcosmic of the world outside the school and wonders whether the school's real curriculum is conformity to an institution whose chief function is a holding or custodial one.

> The large schools seem to be very much a microcosm of the larger society. They're a big urbanization. There's an impersonality about them that is part of the impersonality of urban life. There's the same emphasis upon achieving material goals. There's the same emphasis upon getting ready to do a job that will pay well, the emphasis that education is designed for economic advancement. There's the structuring of the school with its administration indicating what should be happening in the society that is the school. Is it not true that the large composite school is really a society similar to the society outside and that many of the things we teach are designed to fit the people right into a niche in the society? There's also the matter of conformity with the regulations which the school has set, perhaps necessarily. The direction is towards conforming to things as they are rather than trying to set up new and different objectives (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).
>
> There are so many things in the school program as well as outside the school program that the student is torn between extremes and the school becomes a holding institution performing a custodial function. It is a place for students to go until they become old enough to get jobs, or until they're acceptable for jobs, or until they can find a job. It's a place where they spend a few hours a day until they can graduate and go to work. You sense this custodial factor sometimes when you go into a classroom: you see students not too anxious to become involved (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Lynass concurs with Buxton, observing that highly structured, impersonal education on a supermarket model not only results in conformity but desecrates human potential.

> It would be very difficult to say that a high school attempting to accommodate eighteen hundred people is offering

much of what you would call educational opportunity. Maybe what we are offering, instead, is a form of socialism in which students are programmed from grade one to grade twelve to sit in five rows of seven and pretend that they're both comfortable and learning something. Maybe we are desecrating all human potential in the change to the highly structured urban school. I don't know how the school boards or teachers can have any effective voice in education once it gets away from the immediate community. I suppose that impersonal education has advantages, but I haven't been able to recognize them. I haven't been able to come to terms with them (Lynass: 4 April, 1977). I feel desperately sorry for the children today.

As for the length of the school day or the length of the school year, it doesn't much matter because students today, particularly in high school, have after-school jobs and summer jobs. No one has pointed out to them that high school, properly pursued, is a full-time job, that it's important for them to take time off to play all forms of games, whether they play them badly or well, that the football club at the school is not nearly as important as throwing the ball around in the little park after school hours. Everything has been so finely structured that we have structured humanity out of the students. They go for jobs because they need the money. What matter that you win the whole world if you lose your own soul? We have taken the soul out of the students and substituted economics (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

There are eighteen hundred students where I teach now. There are a tremendous number of students who come in at noon hour simply because they have nowhere else to go. They'll come in, bring their lunches, sit down, and chat just because they feel at home there (Lynass: 12 April, 1977). I feel very keenly that no school should be over five or six hundred. I have come to feel that the teacher,

> perhaps, should live in the community in which she teaches. I don't think a teacher should teach in a school so large that it's impossible to know every student in the school. A teacher should know not only the students who actually come into her class, she should know all the others as well. That supermarket structure of the high school and of the junior high is one of the great changes that has occurred in Alberta education: it would be hard to justify both the monetary price and the human price that it has cost us (Lynass: 4 April, 1977).'

Like Buxton, Lynass has come to the conclusion that the schools are little more than costly prisons where students are kept in warm captivity.

> The actual situation is that many of our students experience little more than being corralled or jailed. One of the primary functions of the public-school system has been a custodial function since the fifties when it became so large that there was a minimum of time for individual concern. I grant that education costs too much; but I don't think in the real sense that we're educating. We're just holding. We're keeping them off the labour market. Where else would you put them? You have your choice: either increase Parks and Recreation and the police force, or corral them in school. There certainly is a captive group in school, but I haven't any solution under the present system where the parent believes that a child must have a university education to amount to anything. The general feeling that public education costs too much I see as a very good sign because it is making us take a look at how long we are prepared to have large numbers of our students just using the school as a shelter from the cold or a place to sit where they won't be challenged (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

SCHOOLS: ORGANIZATION, PROGRAMS, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH

Semestering and Streaming: Effect on Teachers and Students

Large schools in the city have almost universally adopted the semester system, a time-tabling device whereby students have fewer and longer classes each day for half of the school year instead of many shorter classes each day for the full ten months. In his study of the semester system, Rieger found, as much educational research has done in this and other fields, that there was little significant difference, except to the individual teacher, and that most opinions clustered around the mid-point.

> The last study I did for the A.T.A. just a year ago was on semestering. Some concern was expressed in Executive Council about the fact that some teachers found semestering very unsatisfactory. The survey I conducted showed that some teachers thought it was the answer to their problems, others couldn't find words strong enough to condemn it, and many could take it or leave it, although most teachers who had experience in both systems preferred semestering. Whether a school year is in semesters or quarters or something else, whether the classes are an hour or two hours long, I don't think make very much difference. They may to an individual teacher, but they're not really essential things. If you made comparisons of school systems around the world, you would find every conceivable variety, and the results probably not much different (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Lynass represents the group in Rieger's study who "couldn't find words strong enough to condemn it," concluding that semestering lends

itself to superficiality.

> I maintain that when you look at Paradise Lost very carefully and look at Milton's stated purpose, "to justify the ways of God to man," then semestering must be Satan's aim, to justify his victory to present-day educators. It's the fastest way I know to shift people, but I'm not sure that either education or building cars is benefitted by the assembly line; and semestering comes very close to it in education. We can argue that it allows students to come into school and out of it with greater frequency, that it allows greater flexibility of many things; but it comes right back to asking the question of what our main purpose in education is. Semestering doesn't give us time to ripen. It's like instant mashed potatoes. You get the appearance, but somehow it is not the real thing. And semestering has speeded things up so that we don't have time to examine the wonders in relationships (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

Buxton explains the development of the semester system as an antidote to the previous system and concludes that neither system is very satisfactory.

> When I was on the board, I rather favoured the semester system in that it gave longer periods of time in class. It got rid of the rat-race and chaos of a bell ringing every thirty-five or forty minutes and students moving through seven or eight classes a day. The periods were long enough for students to become involved and permitted a variety of activities. It does reduce the number of directions the student's mind has to focus in one day. There may, however, be something quite unsatisfactory about having long periods in too short a time in terms of months to become really absorbed, especially in English. I think, perhaps, there's a direction now to give English a full year's treatment.

> Perhaps, semestering is something of a blind alley in a way; neither it nor the seven or eight subjects a day is particularly satisfactory (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Streaming is yet another matter of school organization thought to be necessary when large numbers of students are thought to lack intellectual equipment, necessary background, or motivation and, hence, are singled out from other groups of students and given special or different programs. Rieger expresses some doubt, preferring to view students as individuals rather than streams, although he thinks some teachers can make streaming succeed.

> Although I haven't had much first-hand experience with streaming, I was at a hearing of the Cameron Commission when a grade-one teacher was asked by one of the commissioners how many groups or streams she thought desirable in a class. She said thirty. I am doubtful that streaming is a valuable educational device; but, like many other things in education, sometimes it may work marvellously in the hands of certain teachers (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Most urban composite schools practise a kind of streaming which allows students to choose either a vocational or a matriculation route. If the students choose the vocational route, they then must take non-matriculation courses in areas such as English, mathematics, and social studies. While in theory it is possible--indeed legally specified--that students may register in any course for which they meet the entrance standard, vocational students are discouraged from registering in matriculation courses. The matriculation students, also, are discouraged from taking non-matriculation courses. This kind of streaming exculpates the school from charges of discrimination since the students have presumably made a free choice. It is to this kind of streaming which

Lynass' laconic comment refers.

> As for streaming, whether we like it or not, it's done all the time because if a student elects to take Motor Mechanics, then he has streamed himself into what he's going to get in English and math (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

Dubious about streaming at any level, Buxton finds it particularly unjustifiable in elementary school and refers anecdotally to the feeling of worthlessness it engenders in the student.

> I've never been enamoured of streaming, particularly in the elementary school. A teacher teaching a single grade has an opportunity to adjust the program. The brighter students can influence the others, an aspect which is lost when students are divided into the lowest and the highest group, particularly in elementary school and, perhaps, even in junior and in senior high school classes. When I was at Harry Ainlay one day, I went to sit in on a class which had been set apart from the rest because they were having difficulty with the subject. When I sat down at the table around which they were seated, the first thing they said was "Why did you come and sit with us? We're the dumb class." I hate the feeling that students must have when they realize that they're the "dumb class" (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Curriculum: Development, Strengths, and Shortcomings

Curriculum in Alberta is developed by teachers and by The Department of Education. The prescriptive content and goals of all programs are set forth in The Program of Studies. The content and goals are, theoretically, mandatory. Using as a specific example the curriculum for one high-school course, Lynass observes that the present curriculum, like semestering, makes for superficiality in instruction and in evaluation.

She is concerned that curriculum is not only hastily conceived but unthinkingly followed.

> I have a very strong opinion about curriculum: there's too much of it. The one I know best is the grade-twelve English curriculum. How can a person cover ten short stories, ten essays, a Shakespearean play, a modern play, a book of poetry, an in-depth study of poetry, a novel, and have the students write anything about which they have had time to think? Carl Van Doren, in "A Note on the Essay," makes the point that in good writing there is the matter, the manner, and the man and that ideas must have lain inside of one long enough to have some depth. We, however, rush students through in five months what has taken their teacher ten years to think through. And any student who has thought about it and written an essay deserves the courtesy of a well-marked essay; and you're not going to get either good essays nor well-marked essays with too much material in too short a time. That's what we're facing in curriculum today. It's neither the quality of the curriculum nor the quality of the teaching. It's a cram course to get credits. The Curriculum Branch should be aware of it. I am vehement (Lynass: 29 March, 1977). I don't think we examine things carefully enough. We just jump on band-wagons (Lynass: 23 March, 1977). Education has become an occupational disease for those who need a job, and they've taken it out of the hands of common sense. That's all I feel is wrong about the whole system of programs of studies (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

Rieger, speaking from an historical vantage point, sees teacher representation in curriculum development, piloting of curriculum, and continuous curriculum revision as signs of progress. His personal view of curriculum is a sanguine one, which he attributes, in part, to the fact that his subject area is mathematics.

I think the way curriculum is made now is good. Practising teachers have a voice as a result of being nominated by the Association, which is a critical point. Sometimes, when the government sets up a committee with representation from teachers, it finds a teacher who is "suitable," that is, a supporter of the government. The A.T.A. has always felt that a representative of teachers must be chosen by the teacher body. Sometimes, governments won't see that. Another good feature in Alberta curriculum today is that there are continuous opportunities for try-outs of curriculum, which is quite a bit different from 1936 when the order came from the Department that in the elementary schools enterprise be instituted. There was no warning, no preparation. The present continuous revision of curriculum is good, too. Formerly, we used to have a house cleaning every fifteen years or so--upset everything and start all over. Continuous revision seems more reasonable although it's difficult for teachers.

I have never felt seriously frustrated by the prescribed curriculum since it always allowed a reasonable amount of latitude. In topics like the binomial theorem, there aren't really many different attitudes you can have towards them; consequently, my views may not be very significant. Mathematical matters don't arouse the emotions very much; for example, for a long time we had a section on the differential calculus in grade-twelve algebra. In the mid-fifties, when it was dropped, I don't recall any great furor although some people were sad because differential calculus is an elegant device with which you can do all kinds of marvellous things. Since it was, however, replaced with other lovely things such as series, permutations, and combinations, the revision wasn't too badly accepted (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Buxton, who believes teachers and students need both freedom and help in curriculum, is concerned that political expedience may result in

narrow and rigid curriculum. He, like Lynass, is apprehensive of the band-wagon approach.

> Over the years we got away from the central authority saying these are the objectives, these are the materials which must be used, and these are the things which must be done. There's a real danger, however, that we may get back to that when politics enter education and it becomes politically expedient to say we must return to the basics. While we don't know what this back-to-the-basics is going to involve, there is talk about a scope and sequence program which can be a scope and sequence program decided by someone else; and, in the final analysis, curriculum has to be what happens in the classroom. If there is too much political pressure on curriculum committees, then the result may be rather narrow curricula.
>
> Teachers, and students to a limited degree, ought to have some freedom in creating their own curricula, but they also need some help and suggestions. We can always be helped by suggestions from others. There is a danger that externally set curricula can be too restrictive and inhibit the teacher's freedom to explore new areas that just happen to arise but which are very challenging and can lead students into new voyages of discovery (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).
>
> There's another thing that bothers me at times, and that's the band-wagon approach to education. You find something, programmed learning for example; and you say, "Aha! This is <u>it</u>!" I have programs in grammar and programs in the teaching of poetry which had a good sale at the beginning, but the whole business of programmed learning and teaching machines is something you very seldom hear about now; at least, there isn't "the first fine careless rapture" that we had when programmed learning and teaching machines first emerged (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Evaluation: Kinds of Evaluation and Evaluators

Evaluation includes issues such as who should evaluate, who should be evaluated, and how should the evaluation be done. Speaking from the perspective of the progress made in education since the era of the inspector, Rieger places confidence in self-evaluation of teachers and in evaluation of teachers by school principals.

> Evaluation procedures, thirty years ago, consisted of an inspector coming around for a couple of hours every couple of years to "inspect" the school, the pupils, and--especially--the teacher. A good deal of work was done ten years ago on self-evaluation of schools and teachers. I thought then that it was a procedure with much potential, but I do not know how extensively it is used. An important factor in the improvement of education is the great change in qualifications and duties of principals of schools. Twenty years ago, most principals didn't really know anything about supervision. In recent years, principals have become more expert. One thing that helped was a two-week leadership course offered each summer for school principals, which was an eye-opener to most people who were sent there. Secondly, courses in administration at the University have become very, very popular. I think most principals now have some theory of administration, curriculum, instruction, and evaluation. I think the principal has the major responsibility at this point (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Lynass defines the evaluation of programs and of teachers as the responsibility of teachers and students, admitting there are weaknesses in student evaluation. She concludes that, ultimately, evaluation is performed by the taxpayer.

> The only evaluation that is of value is when the teacher and the students themselves evaluate the class. If an exam has been failed, the teacher examines very carefully the value of the exam, the value of the teaching, and the effort of the students.
>
> You can't really evaluate education until years later. Students who return to tell a teacher about the effectiveness of a course provide valid evaluation; however, it's only the students who go on to university and find that their grade twelve was valuable who come back and tell us. The students who found nothing in grade twelve don't come back.
>
> Sooner or later, we are evaluated by the taxpayer, who says that this is what he wants in the schools. The problem with evaluation by the taxpayer, however, is that it is now putting a burden on the schools that is too heavy, too unrealistic, and one which cannot be accepted (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

Buxton favours evaluation of teachers which augments their efficacy and which would remove the incorrigibly incompetent from the classroom.

> The chief purposes of evaluation and supervision are to increase teacher competence and to identify and, perhaps, eliminate the incompetent teacher who shows that no advice, suggestion, or assistance can make him anything but incompetent; and there are some of those. Competent and highly competent teachers don't mind evaluation. I was happy to have someone come in who seemed to be interested in what I was doing (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

After presenting a lively sketch of the execrably inept evaluator, Buxton goes on to explain the characteristics of a sympathetic supervisor-consultant-evaluator whose talents would be useful in achieving the purposes of evaluation.

> I might touch upon why evaluation fails and may be resented by teachers. The poor evaluator has narrow vision and allows no deviation in teaching style. He is unfamiliar with the subject or has never been a competent teacher. His visits are too brief and too infrequent to be valid. He is either unable to offer helpful suggestions or thinks that evaluation means simply grading performance without suggesting how the performance may be improved. His evaluation is so conducted as to be a traumatic experience for the teacher. He makes no allowance for a very difficult class containing many students with behaviour problems.
>
> A good consultant-evaluator can be invaluable in a school system, but he needs to be carefully selected. Merely having the reputation of being a topnotch teacher may not be enough. Such a teacher can be dogmatic, overbearing, impatient, and even abrasive. Let's admit, however, that this teacher-evaluator-helper is a limited commodity. The task requires humanity, understanding, a co-operative attitude, the ability to establish a relationship with students quickly, and a high degree of teaching competence so that he can teach demonstration lessons.

Buxton is in agreement with Lynass and Rieger that self-evaluation is an important technique. Like Lynass, he considers students capable of evaluation.

> Self-evaluation, co-operative discussions among teachers, and student evaluation are also valuable. There's no reason why students shouldn't be considered teacher-evaluators. Who but the clients or patients evaluate other professions? (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

While he is not prepared to accord to all school principals the direct role of teacher evaluation, Buxton believes principals have a responsibility in creating a climate in which evaluation can function

effectively. He thinks the principal could exert leadership in removing incompetent teachers.

> Principals function in evaluation, as well. The principal needs most of the qualities that students have listed for the good teacher: is interested in learning, enthusiastic, encourages students, and has high standards. Quite frankly, however, many principals are not equipped to evaluate teachers because they are busy with administration; teaching is not their function when they become administrators; they get further away from it the longer they remain administrators; and they may have been drawn from areas like physical education or shop and may be poorly acquainted with the materials, the philosophy, or the methods in other subject matter fields. I'm not saying this to be critical of principals: some of them may be very good evaluators; others may have real problems with it. Although the principal may not be evaluating, he may provide an educational environment in which teachers realize that they have his support, his help in the solution of problems, his encouragement to innovate, and his co-operation in providing stimulating education for students. Another important responsibility of his is to eliminate those who have proved themselves incompetent. It's not only the waste of salary but the harm that they can do to students in creating boredom, bullying students, making them uncomfortable, and making students feel that their education is a waste of time (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Research: Types and Results

Leaving aside technical matters such as computerized models and analyses, discussion of practical educational research includes consideration of the general nature of research, agencies or people engaged in it, the kinds of research, its results, and the dissemination of its findings.

Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton, in addressing themselves to these topics, display a range of views.

Rieger, during the period from 1966 to 1975, conducted major studies for The Alberta Teachers' Association. This, together with his mathematics background, enables him to speak on the matter of educational research from a position of considerable authority. Rieger is convinced that there is little in education which can be definitely proven.

> Education is something like mathematics, in some ways. I think it was Bertrand Russell who made the wise crack: "Mathematics is the science in which we don't know what we're talking about, nor whether what we say is true." In education, we never know just what we're aiming at; and we never know what has been accomplished by what we have taught. I'm serious about that. There's nothing, or very little, that you can prove in education. For example, attempts have been made from time to time, and we continually hear proposals, to set up some kind of a testing procedure so that we'd have bench-marks. That sounds quite plausible; but let's take about the simplest school subject I can think of, spelling. Suppose you set up a list of spelling words and planned to give this to grade-six students every year for the next forty years. Because even spellings change or words go out of use, the list would have obsolete words in it. That's a simple case. It's much more difficult in other areas. In grade-twelve mathematics, we used to have a section on calculus. If a standard had been set up in 1945, by 1955 it wouldn't have been any use because calculus was no longer on the curriculum in 1955 (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Rieger thought The Human Resources Research Council was an important advance in research and is puzzled by the government's action in disbanding it. He is interested in examining the nature of any given

aspect of actual classroom practice and in research which provides a description of the teaching force.

> The A.T.A. advocated a greater emphasis on research for a long while, and so did The Home and School Association when it was active during the late fifties and early sixties. The government set up The Human Resources Research Council. The A.T.A. would have been happier with just education research; but we were assured that the Council would include education. Its director, Lorne Downey, was an educator from the University. The Council was a step forward; but it was one of the first things the new government killed, perhaps because it didn't want to have somebody else doing research into areas that are its responsibility. I was sorry to see it go. It was promising.
>
> Much useful research can be done in, for example, the open-area classroom, in finding out how it works, where it works well, how it is that it works, what makes it work. I had a little job to do with semester systems just a year ago for the A.T.A. There's no proving that a semester system is superior or inferior to the standard full-year system; but my survey showed that it was obvious that some people thought it was very good, and for them it was. The interesting thing is why? What features of it were found to be so useful? Another important and useful kind of educational research is the keeping up to date of a statistical record of the teaching force. Since we now need teachers with such varied qualifications and since it takes four years to prepare teachers, it is vital to be able to estimate the number and kinds required in the future (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Inclined to view statistical evidence with skepticism and to believe that much research merely proves the obvious, Lynass is also suspicious of research which is done for degree purposes. She is provocative in suggesting that the techniques and conclusions of research

studies which have been accepted as classroom practice should themselves form the subject of research.

> People in education have the opportunity to do their own research. I'm inclined to agree with Mark Twain, of course, in his famous remark about statistics: there are lies, damn lies, and then there are statistics. I'm inclined to think also that much research is obvious; that is, no one needs research to know that industry, university, and the layman are accusing us of graduating illiterates. We don't need research to know that we're under the gun. It wouldn't, however, do any harm to have a bit of research to see if the top eight percent, which was the group going to university in 1957, are better, equal to, or lower than the top eight percent going now. To examine the average going to university is not a fair comparison. Of course, they're getting duds in university. If you're going to send everybody through high school and the university is going to be paid for the number of students it grinds through, it's going to have an effect. Although research is necessary in the light of the times, it's easy enough for the areas and purposes of research to be suspect because there have to be enough areas and topics for Master's students to get their degrees.
>
> Research now should begin to re-examine the research. There was a time when you couldn't do a research project on something that had been done before. Maybe we should investigate the techniques and some of the research we have accepted such as open-area schools or teaching the novel in high school (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

Buxton finds that very little of the massive amounts of available research gets into the schools because of its sheer voluminousness and because so much of it provides no very satisfactory answers. As an example, he quotes his own study, the findings of which have been

contradicted by other studies. He does, however, indicate one area in which an answer appears to be emerging.

> Although we've had hundreds of graduates, Master's and Ph.D's, and there are racks and racks of theses and dissertations in the library, very little research gets into the schools. It is hard to know what to select. All those theses would take a teacher's full career to read, and there are conflicting and contradictory conclusions. It seems to be rather difficult to get very definite answers in education on any one question. Take one as simple as the one I applied myself to in '58 which was what would be the effect of increased student practice, careful student revision, and correction by teachers on student writing. I found that there was a significant difference between the experimental group who wrote sixteen extra essays which were revised, read carefully, and criticized. It had its doubtful elements, however, and it's been followed by dozens of pieces of research in the same area, notably the Lois Arnold-Dwight Burton study in Florida which contradicts mine entirely. The evidence in this area, then, is still contradictory. We've never reached a conclusion. We just don't have evidence that a great deal of writing by students marked by teachers has an impact. A reason for it may be that the growth in English stretches from the one-year-old, the experiences in the home through the next six years, and through an additional twelve years of school. It's a slow process, whereas all the experiments are designed to try to find out what happens in a few months, in a semester, or a year. The results are sometimes negligible, sometimes contradictory.
>
> Some answers, however, are emerging. Again and again, we seem to be getting the result that writing competence is, to a degree, related to the amount of reading. Anything we do in this area is supported by widespread

research, all of which seems to point to the same answer. It might be self-evident, but at least we have research to support it (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

According to Buxton, the chief value of university research is that it may make for more thoughtful teachers.

Research being done at the University is a valuable exercise for potential teachers because it causes one to think about education. It's important in education to graduate people who have given some thought to problems and who realize that there aren't easy answers to questions.

Buxton is dissatisfied with the research survey and, like Rieger, advocates research into actual classroom practice.

I can't become too enthusiastic about the Gallup Poll kind of research in education, the normative survey. Some of them are rather suspect in that there isn't a complete return. One always wonders about the people who didn't respond. Would they all have gone this particular direction if they had responded? Why did they not respond? The responses to these surveys are also influenced by what one had for breakfast, the kind of sleep one had the night before, the mood one is in, and one's thoughts at that particular minute.

What I would like to see on the part of both Faculty people and people who are creating large investigations outside is research as to what is actually happening in the schools and the problems that teachers face. What are the disciplinary problems? Can we find any roots for these problems? How much leadership are principals providing? What are some of the factors that make students less effective than they might otherwise be? Although these are rather intangible, they are questions that concern me about education. They may be difficult to determine, but we need much more "barefoot research" that

> gets right down and investigates teaching procedures, processes, teachers, and students in action. These studies that research classroom after classroom may be of value. They not only suggest what happens, but they may have implications for what could or what ought to happen. Intensive interview research should have some value where people who have considerable experience in the classroom are asked about their experiences, problems, and solutions. On a wide scale, this might give us a better idea (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

BACK TO THE BASICS

Introduction

Back to the basics is an interesting slogan and one which merits thoughtful analysis. Contained in it are at least four assumptions: that there is a knowable entity or body of material which is basic; that whatever this body of material comprises, it is not part of current practice; that this body of material was at some time in practice and effective; and that there can and should be a return to this time. No less interesting is the existence of a movement which seeks to fulfil the promise of the slogan and whose number and constituents are not readily determinable except that it almost certainly includes university professors, spokesmen of business concerns, teachers, members of the press and other media, and part of the general public. An inescapable inference which may be drawn from its existence is that there is some degree of very intense dissatisfaction with schools, teachers, and students, a dissatisfaction which gains sombre irony in the light of universal education having become almost a reality in Alberta and in view of teacher education at a (quantitatively) higher level than ever before.

The movement is interesting, as well, in its demands for a return to traditional grammar and departmental examinations. It must be remembered, however, that both were abandoned for good reasons. Traditional grammar was not effective in helping students to write well; and, all too frequently, the examinations led to poor pedagogy and questionable practices.

Criticism of Schools: The Decline of Literacy

Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass have given serious consideration to the issues and are in agreement that teachers are unprecedentedly well qualified, that most of them are competent, and under attack. Rieger comments on teacher preparation and competence.

> A major strength in Alberta education is the preparation of teachers. Except for the lack of an extended practicum, the preparation of teachers here is as good as anywhere on this continent. The background of B.Ed. graduates in the theory and practice of education, in their subject specialization, and in general education is excellent. The requirement of a degree for a teaching certificate is a high point in Alberta education. The competence of teachers is certainly a lot higher than it was in the past. How could it help but be? I told you what a beginning teacher was like in 1932 (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Buxton confesses that he is puzzled as he juxtaposes better teacher qualifications and current criticism.

> Back in the fifties, the great majority of the students we were graduating into teaching were Junior E's, that is, people with one-year teacher training because there was a shortage of teachers. The Faculty and the A.T.A. kept a continuous pressure on the government, and now we have all university-trained people; but the thing that could puzzle

> one is that we have better-qualified teachers than we have ever had before, and yet I don't know of any time in history that I have heard such rigorous criticism of education, of what's happening in the schools, particularly such things as literacy and student reading (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

It is Buxton's opinion that the critics of education (even such presumably knowledgeable public figures as Pierre Berton, Canadian author and commentator, and Charles Lynch, a political writer for Southam Press) proceed from an uninformed and outdated base.

> The public and many educators may be talking in a vacuum part of the time. They're critical of the schools on the basis of very limited observation, if any, of the schools; for example, I think of Pierre Berton and Charles Lynch, imported at two thousand dollars, all the way from Toronto and who know very little about what's happening in the schools. People applauded Pierre Berton when he criticized education. I didn't feel like applauding him at all because he was talking about schools of ten or fifteen years ago. I've heard from American educators who cross the line to say, "Well, these are the terrible things you are doing to students." I think a part of it is the cliché: everybody's gone to school so they know the schools. Everybody hasn't had appendicitis. Everybody isn't acquainted with law. Everybody isn't an engineer. These are professions that are rather sacrosanct compared with teaching because everybody knows what teachers do in the schools. Everybody was there (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Buxton points out that discovery of what is happening in schools necessitates classroom observation.

> Most people don't realize that teaching is not just passing information on to students. There are the considerations of whether or not students accept the information,

> whether it's meaningful to them, whether they're involved or whether they're sitting passively in classrooms. I find that I get better concepts of what's going on in the schools by going into the classroom (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

In the absence of convincing statistical evidence of a decline in literacy, Buxton is curious about the views professors hold on evaluation of teachers.

> What we face now is a criticism of decline of literacy. We have no figures from ten years ago, nothing at all to indicate what the level of literacy was then. Nobody can tell you whether literacy has declined in terms of student population. As for many university professors being convinced that literacy has declined, it's interesting that of the many who are demanding back to the departmentals I wonder how many would be themselves prepared to have an outside agency test their students. Is there such a difference between teachers and university teachers that teachers must have an outside agency test their students, but university professors are so sure of what students need to know that they can set and grade their own tests? (Buxton: 20 April, 1977)

Lynass is concerned that teachers are being held accountable for a situation in which other agencies share responsibility. Agreeing with Buxton, she is not convinced that the critics have the right basis for their criticism.

> There is the public interference in education that is exerted by the lobbies and pressure groups such as The Chamber of Commerce. There is so much interference that education has become the slut of commercial enterprise; they use it at their own pleasure (Lynass: 4 April, 1977). The Alberta teachers are facing tremendous criticism, and I'm not sure it's solely the teacher's fault (Lynass: 29

March, 1977). Actually a large percentage of the teachers do an extremely good job, considering the circumstances (Lynass: 12 April, 1977). Alberta education at the moment is dominated by demands of industry and university. I find it very frustrating to be charged with failing when I'm not sure the people who judge me have the right basis for judgment (Lynass: 16 March, 1977). Everybody is sure he knows exactly what should be taught in the school. All you have to do is read the Edmonton Journal or listen to some of the T.V. announcers to know that they could do a better job than we're doing (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

Rieger, referring to a Folio article, "Report Examines Undergraduate Studies in English," (March 3, 1977) summarizing the findings of the Priestley report, provides not only an illuminating analysis of the statistical implications of the report based on population figures now and in the past but adds a gently barbed conclusion.

I'm thinking again of some of the talk that we hear about the illiteracy of people entering university. Now, I came across an interesting thing in this Folio, a report of The Association of Canadian University Teachers of English by Dr. F.E.L. Priestley. He was a brilliant student, very well known at the University when I was first there. I'm sure he is very expert in English; but as often happens, a person who is expert in one field is not necessarily expert in another. The report, released at the U. of A., was critical: "an increasing number of students are coming to the nation's universities deficient in English training . . . . The professors find that although the top ten or fifteen percent of the students at the gates of the universities are as proficient in English as in the past, the remainder are much less prepared." That says more than appears at first sight. "The top ten or fifteen percent at the gates": there are proportionately a lot more at the gates than there were thirty years ago. When I first went to the University,

there were four hundred freshmen. Now how many are there? About seven thousand? In 1929, if ten percent of those four hundred were good in English, that would be forty students. If ten percent of the present seven thousand freshmen are as good in English, that would be seven hundred students. But the seven hundred bears to the total present population of the province a greater proportion than the forty did to the total population of 1929: seven hundred is about seventeen times more than forty, but the total population isn't seventeen times greater. Thus, according to the report of the University Teachers of English, we're getting a greater proportion of good and capable students, and that's what makes me hopeful. I don't know why the report said it in such an obscure way. We used to think that only about ten percent of the population were capable of profiting from university education. I don't think we realize our own strength. We're better than that.

This kind of criticism isn't news, however. W.G. Hardy, at one time head of The Department of Classics, was very popular and very highly regarded. In the summer sessions of the thirties and forties, most students tried to enrol in his courses. In a little pamphlet, written about 1952 or '53, Dr. Hardy criticizes progressive education. He wants to go back to the basics, pointing out that the quality of English of the students entering university has been declining for some time. I have no doubt that you could find such a statement made at least every two years by some important person. I suppose university professors are so wrapped up in their subjects it's hard for them to tolerate fools or to suffer them gladly. It's hard for them to realize, perhaps, how little they knew when they started high school or first came to university. They don't have the faith that I have in the ability of people to improve themselves. What I don't hear professors say is how much worse the professors of

English are than they used to be. If kids coming in have been getting so bad, surely the professors by now must be getting pretty bad, too (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Commenting on the fact of mass education, Lynass reminds the University that it has yielded to mass education itself and should be more cautious about drawing conclusions on the basis of comparing dissimilar groups.

> There's no point in arguing the literacy question. We do not meet the standards that the University wants, nor do we meet the standards that the business community wants; but I wonder if either of them is being fair in the light of mass education. Our system is far from perfect; in fact, it's a waste of money, but to charge us with the literacy question while wishing to maintain a university of twenty thousand when three thousand used to be considered an overload is not fair. For the longest time, fewer than three percent of high-school graduates went to university, and fewer than eight percent of the students entering school ever got past grade ten. What does the University expect when they try to compare a fifty percent group to what used to be a three percent group? (Lynass: 23 March, 1977) Instead of saying we're illiterate, we're progressing. I would like to remind everyone that the best of our students are as good as they ever were, if not better, and that (Lynass: 16 March, 1977) there are only a very few people in this world who are really literate, anyway: Chesterton, Disraeli, Gladstone, Carlyle (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Traditional Grammar and Alternatives

Buxton, reacting to the perennial call for a return to traditional grammar, explains why and how English grammar came about.

> And then, back to the basics. Among those basics, many will tell you that if the kids are going to be literate, they need more English grammar. The reason for English grammar being introduced in the schools in the first place was that the rising middle class realized that the one thing that separated them and their offspring from the aristocracy was the aristocrats' ability to use the English language effectively. Ergo: study grammar. Traditional grammarians well into the twentieth century have made fortunes out of producing grammar books largely based on Latin. I'll never forget the example of John Walls back in the eighteenth century defining the uses of "shall" and "will," which we've followed ever since. He had no reason for the rules. He sat down one night, decided this was the way it should be, put the rules in his grammar book, and all the other grammar books followed suit (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Convinced that traditional grammar does not improve oral or written expression, Buxton outlines alternatives in language study.

> During the past half century, investigators have accumulated a substantial body of research which indicates that prolonged teaching of traditional grammar does little to increase students' competence in speech and writing, largely because this grammar is an inaccurate description of the structure of the English language. Linguists emphasize that this research does not mean that we abandon language study. Instead, they suggest that this study be broadened to include several language areas that have hitherto been neglected: the fascinating history of English; the levels and functional varieties of English usage, such as formal, informal, and nonstandard; some of the interesting regional and national differences in vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation; and a grammar that is a more accurate description of the structure of English

than that provided by traditional textbooks.

> In short, linguists and educators today recommend that instead of going back to such "basics" as traditional grammar, students be encouraged to explore the ways that language is used, and to apply the results of their explorations to their own speech and writing (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

In addition to the possibilities of a more meaningful approach to the study of language, Buxton suggests a method of teaching composition according to the unconventional yet apparently successful model used by British teachers which emphasizes writing by volume on the part of students and minimal teacher correction of papers.

> Since increasing the amount of grammar taught does not seem to promise much increase in student competence, and since teachers are likely doing the best job that they can do with present class loads and limited time, perhaps we should be prepared to try new approaches to the teaching of composition.
>
> British students do far more writing than American students; in some classrooms they seem to be writing all the time. In the lower forms, much of this writing is recorded in notebooks, and includes observations of places, personal experiences, stories, poems, and rough notes for further writing. The teachers read the notebooks from time to time, but make no attempt to correct errors, yet the students write as well as American students and with more zest. If, as I indicated earlier, research thus far is conflicting concerning the value of teacher criticism and student revision, we in Canada might improve our students' literacy and save what Lois Arnold has called "Writer's Cramp and Eyestrain" (on the part of the teacher), by experimenting with some of the approaches used in British schools (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Departmental Examinations

Neither Rieger nor Buxton is convinced that external examinations are very useful. Unimpressed by the assertion that lack of departmental examinations results in a lack of uniformity, Rieger observes that the weakness of the examinations themselves militated against uniformity.

> The dropping of the departmental examinations in the early seventies had far-reaching consequences. It resulted in some loss of uniformity across the province, but there never was as much uniformity as some assumed. This was partly because of the weaknesses of the examinations. For example, even in a subject such as Mathematics 30, the exam measured to a very small degree a student's attitude towards and appreciation of mathematics. Supplementary material such as application of mathematics introduced by the teacher was not measured at all. The exams did not even measure achievement in the prescribed course material. I recall some colleagues and I making an analysis of several years' Chemistry 30 papers. We found that some topics (for example, the blast furnace) were questioned on nearly every paper while other topics in the prescribed textbook were not tested at all. I think it is unfortunate that the dropping of the departmental resulted in an increased percentage of high marks. This is not harmful in itself since there is nothing absolute about marks, but it has created in some quarters the impression that standards have deteriorated (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

Buxton outlines the techniques teachers had to use when he and his friends were teaching grade twelve departmental examination subjects. He indicates that these techniques were questionable.

> There is a great demand for return to external examinations, the departmentals. Let's consider a few techniques we used when there were departmental examinations. I lived through

them for years and years. They do set the curriculum. There's no doubt about that. The teacher is forced to cover the material and to use the methods that will ensure that his students pass those examinations. When I was teaching school in Radway and Fort Saskatchewan, my friends were teaching at Leduc, Camrose, and Mundare. Because we felt that it was our responsibility to get our students through the departmental exams, a technique we used was to mimeograph all the old examination papers possible and spend May and June going over them again and again with students until they could answer all the questions on all the papers. Since the number of questions any examiner can design on a limited body of subject matter is itself limited, the student would likely be successful. Our salary cheque sometimes depended on the number that we got through. I can remember in one school where I taught, I would get a hundred-dollar increase if I got a better than seventy-five or eighty percent pass on the departmentals. I don't know how wide-spread the practice was. I know it was a practice in my school, and I know other teachers who also faced this.

Well, to get and maintain a high batting average on the finals, I discovered still another technique after I had finished teaching high school in Radway and Fort Saskatchewan and went on to teach junior high in Edmonton: don't pass anyone from English 1 until you're sure he has the ability to pass English 2 or 3. Hold him in English 1, and he has two options: he repeats the course, or he realizes that he is a failure and drops out of school.

Teaching for exams also can lead to second-rate teaching; for example, I saw one city classroom in which the students, for three periods in a row, memorized three mimeographed pages of literary terms. It seems to me that this procedure, which I've seen repeated, does little to stimulate student enthusiasm for literature (Buxton: 20 April, 1977),

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Lynass, Rieger, and Buxton, then, have addressed themselves to several major issues in their attempt to characterize the nature of education at the present time in Alberta: societal expectations in light of the reality of schools in the seventies, a reality which encompasses the actual purposes of schools, the mirroring of society in the schools, the effects of society and schools upon students, the typical administrative practices in schools and their effect upon students, curriculum, evaluation of teachers and programs, educational research and its usefulness in providing insight into educational problems, and the dissatisfaction with schools expressed in the back-to-the-basics movement.

Although the thinking of the three shows considerable divergence of opinion and, consequently, no definitive conclusions can be drawn, there are, nonetheless, some tentative inferences which may be made. Perhaps, the most obvious is the one which Althouse (1949: 47) has framed with his usual urbane asperity: "the first thing that strikes the observer of the current educational scene is that we all seem to want more education, even although we appear to be quite critical of what we have." A second inference is that the educational scene is somewhat more complex than can be much illuminated by any simple theory of education: indeed, adherence to such a theory may well lead to the adoption of questionable practices and hinder the search for more effective procedures.

In the area of societal expectations, it appears that there is little clarity. Societal expectations appear to be many and unrealistic.

Perhaps, some of the present dissatisfaction with schools is a result of a lack of information and awareness on the part of the critics as to what schools, especially the large ones, are like right now. There is the possibility that educators have been too zealous or slightly deluded in their claims as to what schools can and should do for children, with the result that the community may believe that it has been misled and cheated. Both are indicative of an estrangement between schools and community. There is at least some likelihood that there are factors other than curriculum and instruction which could contribute to the perceived dissatisfaction with the schools.

Some of these factors could well be resident in the nature of society itself and its large, impersonalized schools and their administrative practices. It is conceivable that students have become disaffected and disenfranchised from active participation in their own education.

> When the school so bores its students that they never want to learn any more, or when it makes them so self-satisfied that they do not see that they need to learn any more, education has not improved them; it has done them irreparable harm . . . . One clear sign of the success of a school which is plain to all . . . is the presence of obvious and unaffected interest on the part of the pupils in all that goes on in the school . . . . If the pupils find school dull and monotonous, if they tolerate it as an inevitable part of inescapable routine, you have every reason to question the wisdom of spending public or private funds on such a school. Either the children are in the wrong school for them or the school is of the wrong sort for any children (Althouse, 1949: 64, 71).

On the basis of some of the statements made by Lynass and Buxton as to the nature of the composite schools, it must, at least, be questioned if Alberta schools can confidently assert their success according to Althouse's criteria.

In view of the complex and confusing nature of education at the moment, the entire matter of evaluation of schools, of teachers, and of students, again, seems questionable. Since there seem to be few answers and little agreement on fundamental issues such as what the schools are in fact doing and what they ought to be doing, it is difficult to know what can be demonstrated by evaluation.

Still another inference which emerges is that educational research, to be a valuable tool, should be carefully conducted and interpreted. Hasty adoption of research findings may not improve practice and may, in fact, lead to a suspicion of research.

What can finally be said about the relationship of schools and society at the present time is that the back-to-the-basics movement is symptomatic, although its proponents display a tendency to regard it as a curative. That there is dissatisfaction is inescapable. Why there is dissatisfaction, what areas are particularly unsatisfactory, where solutions may be discovered, what solutions may be advanced are not as readily discernible. There is the possibility as well, as Rieger has pointed out, that the dissatisfaction with schools is a recurrent one. That there are so many areas of agreement among the analyses provided by educators in the late forties, fifties, and seventies may lend credence to Rieger's view that there is always a discrepancy between the real and the ideal. It would seem reasonable for educators and community to explore this discrepancy with a view to finding some agreement upon a reasonable set of expectations and to experiment with some of the alternatives suggested by Buxton, Rieger, and Lynass.

CHAPTER V

VISIONS OF THE IDEAL AND OF THE FUTURE IN EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Men of all times have speculated about the ideal and about the future. Formulations of the ideal and predictions of the future spring from observations of and attitudes about the past as well as the present. Frequently, people look upon the present, note its lack of perfection, and turn to the past. Certainly, looking to the past is wise and justifiable as long as past practice is not extolled only because it is not the present. Lucretius (Commins and Linscott, 1947: 26), who lived between 99 and 55 B.C., argues in a judiciously mocking way with those of his time who believed that chimeras and centaurs existed in the past.

> Wherefore also he who fables that in the new time of the earth and the fresh youth of heaven such living creatures could have been begotten . . . may babble out many things in like fashion, may say that rivers then ran with gold over all parts of the earth and that trees were wont to blossom with precious stones, or that man was born with such giant frame of force that he could wade on foot across deep seas and whirl the whole heaven about him with his hands.

It is sensible to view the past as a rich lode, and it is useful to trace practices from past to present as bases for projection of the future. Direction for the future comes also from viewing current trends. The past can either be seen in the extravagant light of nostalgia or ignored with contempt; the view of the future is often distorted by excess of optimism or pessimism occasioned by the way the present is seen.

Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1967: 5) cautions against such excess.

> It is commonplace to say that the utopia of progress . . . has faltered in the modern world . . . . Much can be said for this view of man as sorcerer's apprentice, frivolously liberating forces that far surpass control by his intellectual and moral capacities. Nevertheless, this is romanticism.

There has been no shortage of Utopians of either happy or melancholy persuasion from Plato to Kafka; current predictors tend to be a numerous and rather gloomy lot whose favourite themes are human obsolescence and extinction of the species. Education has its prophets such as Tesconi and Morris (1972: 167-168), who formulate a vision of society and its schools according to which "whole new 'second-generation' bureaucracies" have reached two stages: "a stage we may call 'acute Parkinsonianism' . . . and an even more advanced state . . . 'meta-bureautechnocracy.'" Admittedly, there is cause for concern, but some reasoned balance is not amiss. Times have probably always been viewed with dismay by some; too fervent a despair, however, carries the danger of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Harrison Brown (1956: 229) is germane in this context.

> When we enumerate all the difficulties in which the human species can become embroiled, it would appear <u>a priori</u> that the probability of successful transition along any path would be extremely small. Yet the fact that we are able to imagine patterns that might lead to successful transition is, in itself, significant . . . . That which can be imagined by man becomes possible.

That which approaches or fosters the best that man is capable of, that which is possible, and that which may yet come about in society and in education either a little or a long way from the present are themes to which Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass apply themselves. From their discussions emerge definitions, purposes and visions of education, and

descriptions of ideal teachers and schools. Frequently, the three teachers look to the past to find examples. Each advances ideas which could improve education, and each makes reference to the obstacles in the way of progress. The three also speculate about the future. Their ideas are expressed in varying tones: balanced reason, passionate certitude, and good-humoured polemic. None rejects the importance of the past, but none is slavishly adulatory of it. What emerges most strongly is a sense of purposive commitment which considers the shortcomings of past and present with a discerning optimism for the future.

RIEGER: THE IDEAL AND THE FUTURE

Vision, Purposes and Ideals: Betterment and Harmony

For Rieger, education is the way to betterment of the human condition.

> I've always had, and still do have, a great faith in education: that is the way in which the human race will improve its condition. I continue to believe that in the long run, it is understanding and knowledge that will bridge misunderstanding, the lack of sympathy with each other (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

In his work as a staff officer of The Alberta Teachers' Association, Rieger was at times called upon to examine troubled schools. The corrosive bitterness in such schools is the background to Rieger's formulation of the ideal within schools. He also defines the ideal to include the community.

> I don't think there are any absolutes in what constitutes the ideal teacher, school, and school system. It's a matter of harmony. If you have teachers who can work together in

harmony, it's probably an ideal system. In my work, I came across cases and had a part in investigating them where relations among staff members actually broke down to the point where people wouldn't talk to each other because they had different views on certain basic things. I'm pretty sure that teaching suffers in a school like that.

Ideally, there should also be a reasonable degree of harmony between the school and the community: the expectations that the teacher has of the school should be approximately the same as that of the community. Schools are set up primarily to preserve and perpetuate the society even though there are always teachers who see possibilities for improvement and try to spread their ideas. There are always many teachers who are more forward-looking and who quite honestly and fair-mindedly present different views to pupils without trying to indoctrinate them or convert them, which, I'm quite convinced, is legitimate. The teacher does it, however, at his own risk. He may be in trouble if he gets too far away from the expectations of the community. I can't see it as a duty of every teacher to try to lead society into new ideas (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Changes and Obstacles: Practicality and the Government

To move closer to the ideal in teaching, Rieger calls for changes which can be achieved practically. He would change the size of classes, a recommendation which arises from Rieger's work in research and from his convictions about goals in education.

If I had a magic wand, it would do things that money can do; I'm not thinking of a magic wand that will change human nature. One thing I would do is cut down the size of classes because that is one thing that teachers are almost completely in agreement about (Rieger: 9 March, 1977). I did quite a bit of work in research on teachers' aides; and one question

> I always asked teachers in surveys, in different ways, was what they think would be the best improvement. A large majority of teachers would ask for fewer pupils (Rieger: 2 March, 1977). To do some of the things we aim to do, such as encouraging various attitudes and habits, we must have smaller classes. For example, if the objective is merely to have students pass a test in algebra, class size is not very significant; however, if greater understanding and appreciation of mathematics are also objectives, then classes of fifteen to twenty would be much better (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Another change that Rieger thinks would improve teaching, and one he would make, is to extend the period of training in the classroom for prospective teachers; the argument proceeds from his belief in the value of education.

> Internship in teacher education is another thing I would institute right away. The program would last anywhere from half a year to a year. I doubt that a period longer than a year would produce results that pay for the time. The people who would serve this internship already know their subject, how to teach it, and have information about the operation of schools. What they don't know yet is how kids act when you try to teach them. If they can't get some clues on that in half a year or a year, then, perhaps, teaching is the wrong thing for them. I am quite convinced, in my own mind, that some period of that sort would save a lot of teachers who drop out in their first two or three years. It would make life much happier for many teachers, and it would make a big difference in the quality of instruction. People who stick to teaching do solve their problems, one way or another. They may not, however, be the best ways; that is, teachers may work out a system whereby they can maintain order, but it may not be a system that produces the best learning (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

For Rieger, the shadow which falls between the ideal and progress toward it in education is a matter of the attitude of the present government. Rieger contrasts the present legislature with the early Social Credit government.

> What happens in education in Alberta is, usually, a result of the action of the provincial government. The present government, which has been in office about six years now, has made few, if any, advances in education (Rieger: 9 March, 1977). The major problem at this time is not novel: it's the attitude of the government towards financing education. We have always complained about lack of financing in education, but looking back over the years from about 1936 until the mid-sixties, Alberta was quite generous towards education. Now we are at the most prosperous period of our history--prosperity beyond the wildest dreams of people like me--and yet there are restraints on education. Classes have to be enlarged, programs in some schools have to be curtailed. I find this unacceptable in view of my general belief in education. What puzzles me is that a great many of the people in this government are people who have grown up in this province, have had the benefits of a university education here, and have done well because of it. And yet, now they're skeptical about education. I would think that they would be the very people who would be most strongly in favour of strengthening the system so that future Albertans would have even better opportunities. It wouldn't have been surprising if the farmers, small-town business people, and teachers who constituted most of the early Social Credit legislatures had been less enthusiastic about education, not having had much of it themselves. It seems, however, to be the other way around. Maybe because the people in the earlier legislatures didn't have much, they thought it was a good thing (Rieger: 2 March, 1977).

As a result of his views on the performance of the government so far in education, and based on his belief that the provincial government is the central agent for change in schools, Rieger is pessimistic about short term change.

> I'm pretty sure this government will be around for the next seven years; consequently, I don't expect any real improvements in education in that time. There may be some revisions in the curriculum; but I can't see, on the basis of the past six years, any great strides. We'll just hold what we have. If we get behind relative to some other province or country, maybe some action will occur. This government has a negative attitude towards education which I cannot understand (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

In addition to the problem posed by the current provincial government's lack of action, Rieger focuses upon the issue of inner city schools and minority groups in education. Based on his concern about inequity and stemming from his vision of education, Rieger's comments indicate that present actions in both areas will have future implications.

> A fairly serious inequality that will be more noticeable as time goes on is that between the inner city schools and those in the wealthier suburbs. I read some figures which indicate that there's always more money for the schools in the areas where the well-to-do people live than there is for the inner core areas. I suppose these are just the realities of politics; but what I'm looking at are the realities of what happens to the kids that grow up in the inner cities. By skimping a little bit now, we're incurring a big debt in the future. When I say things like that, I'm showing my basic attitude that I believe that education can do something to solve these problems. I realize it isn't a simple thing, but I still believe in it.

> A minority question, that of separate schools--and it goes a long way back--may have consequences for the future. It's very difficult for people of some religions, for example, the Dutch Reformed Church, to see why the Roman Catholics can have separate schools but not the Dutch Reformed. It's possible that more and more pressure will occur for separate schools of other kinds (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

The Future: Technical and Service Education

Turning to a long-range view, Rieger anticipates a future system which will concentrate more heavily upon technical education. He foresees, as well, greater need for training in the service professions, law and medicine.

> In long-range terms, we will have more technical education in the future. Inevitably, we will become more and more industrial. There will be more need for highly skilled people and less for unskilled, and there will continue to be need for people who are so well trained that they will be adaptable to changing technologies. The computer programmers, for example, will have such a good grounding that they will be able to adapt to the changes in computers. The numbers of students in the institutes of technology, which are now fewer than in the universities, will increase. Perhaps, the technical institutes will become more like universities; that is, their courses will still be technical but in greater depth.
>
> Another increasing area will be in the legal and health professions. I foresee a greater number of people going into those. We will need more lawyers: the laws don't get any simpler, and there's a shortage of lawyers now. There are delays in getting cases before the courts, and many people who need it aren't getting the benefit of the services

> of lawyers. Legal services should be available to everybody. The laws are for everybody. It seems logical to me that law should go the same way as Medi-care. I can see the need for more people trained in providing other personal services. For example, we'll probably have more people in mental institutions. I'm not supposing that there would be a greater proportion than at present, but there are certainly many people now who are in and out of mental institutions and probably many more who should have care. I hope that the world doesn't make that any worse than it is (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Rieger's faith in progress, despite current problems, is evident in his conclusion about the future of education.

> In terms of the desirability of the future, technical education is desirable because we're going to need it. I can't envision our going back to some pastoral or nomadic state. We're going to continue to want all kinds of devices which must be designed and made by technical experts. I'm optimistic about the future. I have no doubt that we can provide a school system, including a post-secondary system, that will give us the numbers and kinds of experts that we need in all fields, technical and professional. I'm sure we're nowhere near our potential (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Rieger, then, adopts a progressive, optimistic view of education and of society in which harmony is an important principle. Rieger's forecast of the future includes both technical and professional education more nearly approximating human potential.

BUXTON: THE IDEAL AND THE FUTURE

Vision, Purposes, and Ideals:
Co-operation and Commitment

In his definition of education, Buxton evokes the past. For Buxton, a vision of education as a co-operative enterprise was born in the difficult circumstances of his first year as a teacher in a rural school. He explains how he has since patterned his teaching upon the idea of co-operation.

> In my first year of teaching at Cloverdale, after a really frustrating couple of months, I got the idea that, instead of trying to teach everything myself, I'd have students teach themselves and each other. Eventually, I found that I was in charge of an educational enterprise. I found that students really could help each other. A vision of teaching came out of that experience that I've tried to follow throughout my teaching career; and that is to get students to take responsibility for learning, to get them to co-operate and help each other, and to have respect for students' ability to become self-actualizing learners. I have found that that principle has been pretty effective throughout my teaching career, even in grad seminars. I believe in the involvement of students in their own learning and in providing the opportunity for them to discuss questions and problems, with the teacher, perhaps, throwing out the odd question or problem (Buxton: 18 April, 1977).

Buxton expands his concept of education in his comment upon the purpose of education. He stresses the importance of examining ideas and the responsibility of the teacher in creating enthusiasm for intellectual activity.

> I believe that one of the chief purposes of education is to help students to know about themselves and their world, to learn how to gather this knowledge, to have opportunities to assess their own ideas and the ideas of other students, of their teacher, of society, and its leaders. I think the school can exert leadership in those areas. How can a student develop new interests unless someone introduces him to these areas? He can develop enthusiasm for intellectual activity when the teacher shows him the need for a disciplined approach to learning, which means that the teacher makes demands, sets standards, asks for this intellectual approach, and shows him that it requires effort but that the effort is worth while in self-satisfaction, in the feeling that one is gaining something from education day after day (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Turning to the ideal in education, Buxton first considers the ideal teacher and then shows a number of teachers who approached the ideal. Just as his vision of education arose from past experience, so Buxton's ideal school is based on his experience. His lengthy and detailed account of the demonstration school, and the relationships among staff, students, and community, gives a clear picture of the kind of harmony that Rieger thinks necessary, and fulfills Buxton's vision of co-operative learning and his view of the best purpose in education.

In describing the ideal teacher, Buxton relies upon characteristics which his students identified.

> I've had students in high school list the characteristics a good teacher should have. The lists usually ran along these lines: respects students and students' opinions, knows the subject, uses a variety of methods, gets students involved, is fair and impartial, has enthusiasm for his subject, sets

> standards (this came up again and again), expects students to work and contribute to the success of the lesson, is interested in student achievement, is encouraging, has a sense of humour (students have fun at times), and is both genuine and human (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

As Buxton explains the organization and activities of University High School, he emphasizes the relationship of students and teachers that resulted in student leadership and motivation in learning.

> There were only two hundred and ten students and a staff of six people plus a home ec. and a shop specialist, each of whom brought in students from other schools. There were six classes, two each from grades ten to twelve, each limited to thirty-five students so that we knew them well. There was an excellent relationship between students and teachers, there was good humour, and lots of laughs. We respected them; and, I think, they respected us. The day was divided into five fifty-five minute periods to agree with the Faculty periods so that we could interchange with Faculty members. Each of us taught four out of the five periods per day.
>
> The program wasn't confined to subjects in class. There was a year play in which almost all the students were involved in some way. There was also a sports program. I supervised the boys, but the students gave most of the leadership. I can remember, for example, Norman Kimball, whose name is still famous, coaching the boys' football team. I can remember the best basketball players coaching the basketball teams; the boys who played basketball well also refereed girls' basketball. We had a boxing club, and a chess club for each of which staff members were named as advisers. It sounds a tremendous chore, but really it wasn't because the students took most of the leadership. We had dances, periodically, on Friday nights. I never saw a student drunk at any one of those dances.

> There was no drug problem at that time. I know, too, that the students often met at each other's homes evenings to work on projects, such as short stories that I had assigned. Their parents would come back and say, "Well, these kids! They met every night last week to get that short story in shape." Assignments were almost always completed on time and showed considerable effort. Students were very happy when they achieved good results (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

In further explaining the attitudes and motivations of the students, Buxton gives the examples of his own English class encountering the plays of Shakespeare and coping with the writing of short stories. The classroom atmosphere which is evoked so clearly demonstrates how Buxton put his vision of education into practice.

> The majority of students were quite intelligent though there were average and below-average students. Almost all of them wanted to learn, were prepared to accept considerable responsibility for their own learning and to exert considerable leadership in the classes among themselves. An illustration is the way we approached Shakespeare. We read Macbeth, we discussed the play, and we discussed the problems faced by Macbeth in terms of a man being driven by the forces of ambition. Following that, the students, working in groups, undertook several other Shakespearean plays by themselves. Each group had a couple of class periods to tell about the play and to portray a scene. I can still remember four or five big football players led by Harrison Scott doing Falstaff talking to Prince Hal about the two robbers who become four robbers who become eight robbers. I can remember another group doing the trial scene from The Merchant of Venice with Shylock sharpening his knife and Portia destroying all his illusions. When the groups had finished, I said, "Supposing each group sets up a test on the play and gives the test to the class. Your questions don't always have to be serious."

> They came up with questions like, "Who ran away with somebody and took her Dad's ducats with her?" Although we had a lot of fun with this, I think there was considerable learning and an opportunity for leadership on their part which they were prepared to accept.
>
> I can remember having a grade-ten class writing short stories in groups of two or three. Some of the short stories were stimulating. One student would check the other in terms of language; and because they had helped each other to revise, I had very little marking and red-pencilling to do when the stories came in (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Buxton refers, also, to the way that the other members of the staff at the demonstration school co-operated with each other and with students. Buxton's principal, he thinks, gave good leadership; and the community was supportive. It is interesting to note, as Buxton concludes his description of the ideal school, the sense of purpose and commitment on the part of students, staff, and community.

> For his labs in physics and chemistry, Harold Tanner had student assistants who were interested in science and who set up all the equipment, conducted all the labs, and assisted other students with the lab work. From them, the others gathered some interest.
>
> The staff enjoyed teaching those students. I think we set fairly high standards, and the vast majority of students attempted to measure up. The staff continually exchanged ideas about teaching and about individual students. Guidance counsellors were unknown at the time. Students who had problems knew that they could go to any member of the staff, selecting the member with whom they had a very close relationship. Art Rosborough, the principal, taught mathematics and had only two spares per day for administration and a secretary

three half-days a week. He gave good leadership. Like the teachers, he believed that education was important; and he supported us. His staff meetings were largely devoted to discussion of student problems, the problems of teaching, and the sharing of ideas.

The parents were interested in their children's progress, and this was important. They were involved, supportive, and they were frequently commendatory to the staff. They were prepared to tell us that they liked what we were doing, which gave us a feeling that we were doing something worth while (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Changes and Obstacles: Societal Values, Critics, and Teachers

As Buxton turns from the ideal to speculation of how teaching can more closely approximate the best, he emphasizes the changes he would like to see in current societal values. Referring to the recent criticism of education, which he sees as an obstacle to better teaching, Buxton suggests ways that teachers could improve their performance in the classroom. Buxton begins by calling for a society which holds important and lives by the values it says it wishes schools to teach children.

How can I teach your children gentleness and mercy for the weak and a reverence for life which in its weakness or excess is still a gleam of God's omnipotence, when by your laws, your actions, and your speech you contradict the very things I teach? And I sometimes wonder whether society is giving the kind of leadership outside the schools that it wants the teachers to give within the schools.

Perhaps, if I had a magic wand, I would like to have our society discover that it must contribute not just more money to achieve the education it desires but indicate

> that it actually has the values which it wishes us to achieve in the schools: values such as industry; integrity; perseverance; morality, ethics; humanity; respect for people of other races, religions, and creeds; respect for learning and for our environment; and distaste for violence, profanity, obscenity, pornography, vulgarity, hypocrisy, corruption, and injustice. Society is asking the schools to reform the future society when its example is not always the best. Society might make changes in the behaviour of individuals, of groups, and of corporations; it might make more positive and creative use of the media to indicate that it does consider these values important; and it might provide educational leadership. Such changes in society might show in diminished Nielsen ratings for inane, vapid, and violent programs and for materialistic, anti-intellectual commercials (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Moving from discussion of society in general, Buxton focuses upon the professional critics of education whose importance he does not denigrate but whose influence he thinks has been pernicious in teacher morale. He explains that, in the prevalent attitude of criticism, the professional critics exacerbate the uncertainty of the teacher.

> In the late sixties and early seventies, we've had what might be called the Educational Romantics like John Holt, A.S. Neil, Postman and Weingartner, and Carl Rogers, who have emphasized that schools were too restrictive, too teacher dominated, that too much of the material taught was irrelevant, that there was no provision for individual differences or for student interests, and a lack of freedom to learn. They have some important things to say; but their philosophy can also be dangerous because if we say that a student must be free to follow his own interests, we have to wonder how in the world he's going to develop any new interests. If everything is based solely on where he is, how

> does he go on to develop new interests in history, in the ancient world, in the background of our whole culture? There is another danger, that the teacher is afraid to tamper with these free spirits, afraid to organize a program, afraid to set up standards and demand performance. The teacher becomes a ship at sea without a rudder or a compass, pulled by a variety of winds, so-called student interest, the demands of the public, the ideas that educators are giving him, so that eventually he becomes uncertain of his direction and becomes unsure of his goals. Nothing can be more frustrating or disillusioning to a teacher than this feeling that whatever he does is not the right thing to do (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

To arrive at better teaching, Buxton advocates the need for a sense of purpose on the part of the teacher which he thinks can come from a clearer statement of goals and from the teacher's belief in the worth of the subject he is teaching.

> The teacher needs to have the feeling that he knows where he's going, that he has fairly definite goals for himself and his students, and that he knows some ways of achieving these goals. We'll get better teaching when a good many teachers abandon the idea that they have to be all things to all people, when they get the idea that the subject they're teaching is worth teaching and worth students learning. One has to have that belief. When students ask, "Why do we study this?" he has to have a better answer than "Because there might be a question on the final examination about it." If a teacher believes in his subject, he can ask his students to read, to gather ideas, to respond, to discuss, to evaluate in speech and writing. He'll be much happier and much more comfortable, and so will his students as soon as they find that they are being continually involved in voyages of exploration

into new and exciting areas (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Buxton illustrates specifically how teachers might be able to restore confidence in themselves and in their subject by choosing an area which modern critics think irrelevant--the teaching of ancient history. In his explanation, Buxton shows how he would approach Greek history to make it meaningful.

> If I were teaching the history of Greece, the city states, Solon, Cleisthenes, Phidias, the Parthenon, the great gods, Greek art and architecture, I'd feel that I was teaching something worth while. Could I show relevance? I think I could. We might look at the structure of some of our buildings with their columns and porticos and think back to what the Greeks were able to do, with far more elementary and primitive tools than we have, to create beauty out of stone. We might play around with a few words like "geography," "hemisphere," "thermometer," noting the origins of those words and that we still depend upon the Greeks for all our scientific terms. We might wonder what the Greeks meant by democracy. We might wonder whether they had achieved the perfect democratic state or whether it was a limited kind of democracy based on slavery. We might think about "panic," the god Pan. We might think about the names of the constellations. I could go on and on. Is it relevant? I have an idea the ancient world is worth knowing something about (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

Aside from changes in societal attitudes and teacher morale, Buxton also calls for a variety of schools. He emphasizes that whatever kinds of schools are established the humanities should be a vital part of the program for all students. Buxton implies that present attitudes on the part of students as well as teachers are an obstacle to progress.

> Perhaps, what we need is to experiment with many different kinds of schools; but I have some hesitancy about just creating schools to educate the elite. I still believe that we ought to provide a liberal education for all students. It may need a change in attitude of many students. It may need a teacher going in with the conviction that he wants to give these people an education, that he wants students to be intellectually active, mature, and challenged, that he wants them to find out that there is a thrill in learning about the humanities, about people in the past, and about good literature. If schools are to change society, schools then should remove the student, to a degree, from society so that he can look at it from a vantage point, and to do this, he needs to look at society in the past, the problems man has faced, and his attempts to solve them. I can't avoid the conviction that the humanities have an important place. There need not be an intellectual arrogance about this at all (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Like Rieger, who is convinced that human potential is continually underestimated, Buxton is concerned that students may be disenfranchised if a liberal education program proceeds on the assumption that the humanities are only for the academic elite rather than, as Buxton thinks, for all.

> I think that pretty well all students would benefit from a liberal education. It's an error and a handicapping one to say that some are fit to be only hewers of wood and drawers of water, that the mechanic in a garage is a different person from the lawyer or the professor or the teacher, that he doesn't need a liberal education, that it is impractical for him. Because you're training tradesmen of various kinds doesn't mean that the tradesmen need to be inarticulate. It's a dangerous concept to leave with people--that they can't participate in books, in literature, and in ideas. I foresee

> a danger in underselling the intellectual ability of people. I taught in the schools for twenty years. I didn't find many who couldn't enjoy a good number of the poems and selections that I enjoyed. Admittedly, you have to choose material at the particular level of the student. I keep wondering about this matter of all students not being capable of learning in a humanities program. A teacher's task is to think positively, first of all, to believe that students can learn, and secondly, to try to find activities that they can do at their level that will still be stimulating and will take them a little beyond the level at which they are to some vital, challenging, and interesting experience in the sense of achievement. In my career, I very seldom found students who couldn't take challenges of this kind (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

Further changes that Buxton would suggest center upon school programs and are reflective of his convictions about the worth of the humanities as well as the value of co-operation.

> I wish with this matter of literacy being discussed so much that principals would start thinking about an all-school writing program and start stimulating the staff to do something about it. I think that English teachers, in the present situation, can't accept responsibility for all the writing that students have to do. Social studies has possibilities, but so do mathematics, physical education, and science.
>
> There may also be opportunities in a program integrating English and social studies, a humanity program with several teachers working together. There is, of course, a danger in the tendency to just take the parts that lend themselves to this approach; but there are possibilities (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

The Future: Teacher Training and the Schools

In concluding his speculations upon change and the future, Buxton concentrates upon teachers and schools. Like Rieger, Buxton is concerned about improving teacher training. He believes that dissatisfaction with composite schools will result in changes but is not sure of the direction.

> I realize the A.T.A. supports its teachers and that it is very difficult to prove incompetence, but I hope that there will be some way in the future of getting rid of the incompetents. One could say they should have been discovered in the Faculty, but incompetence doesn't always show up in the Faculty. In terms of the selection procedures of The Faculty of Education, it's rather difficult to select on any other basis than the one we have: the ability to reach a certain standard of knowledge in high school. Many of us have wondered about other tests which we might apply, perhaps, a personality test; yet a teacher who is very quiet, unassuming, and shy, who appears to lack the drive or the initiative to be a successful teacher, may prove very successful in the classroom. I'd much rather give students the opportunity to find out by spending some time in the classroom early in their teaching career whether or not they are equipped to teach. As it is, it is possible for them to go through the secondary program and not do any teaching until the fourth year (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).
>
> Now the schools themselves. As far as large composite schools are concerned, there need to be some readjustments made. I don't know what these readjustments are going to be. I think we're going to have more different kinds of schools. It may be that we're going to find parents who are dissatisfied with the education their children are getting may move more and more toward private schools like

the Old Strathcona School which would provide a liberal education in terms of the humanities with demands made of the students, who are prepared to accept these demands. I am hesitant about Old 'Scona because it's almost going back to the Winchester, Eton, and Harrow idea of elitist education. I wish we could broaden the scope (Buxton: 21 April, 1977).

LYNASS: THE IDEAL AND THE FUTURE

Vision, Purposes, and Ideals: Progressive Conservatism and The Humanities

Like Rieger and Buxton, Lynass' remarks about the ideal in education and the changes necessary to move toward better schools and teaching are informed by a sense of conviction about the purpose and value of education as well as by her experience in the past. Lynass agrees with Buxton about the importance of the humanities. She is provocative about the ideal role of schools. Lynass begins with a statement of her vision of education.

> As for a vision of education, remember Tennyson, who says,
>
> To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
>
> I'd like to get on Tennyson's barque. Education, for me, was being led into a wider and wider world of experience, an experience as much in humility as in conceit (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Describing herself a conservative, Lynass goes on to outline what she sees to be the main purpose of education.

> I'm neither radical nor revolutionary. I'm an extreme conservative who recognizes that humans change slowly, that there are no two humans alike, and that it's only within

very narrow margins you can give the same diet and have it accepted. It sounds radical, but all I'm doing is recognizing the individuality of each human and hoping that somehow you could plan a program so that everyone who was exposed to any form of education enjoyed it, appreciated it, and grew as a result. That's only asking the same thing as Christ asked. It's a very old story which even goes back to Eve eating from the fruit of The Tree of Knowledge. That's all I'm asking for. Who could be more conservative? (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

I don't see the main purpose of education as preparation for a job; I see it as an examination of ideas so that a student feels very comfortable with his own aspect of the values in life. I think it's a joy to discover the value of the nine-times table and to wonder at whoever started to count and why and how they were able to go from counting to the cube root. Whoever first saw the relationship between straight numbers and square roots and cube roots and algebra must have experienced a great joy (Lynass: 29 March, 1977).

According to Lynass, the purpose of education is fulfilled by a humanities program which focuses upon self-knowledge. She explains the role of the teacher in accomplishing the goals of education.

It's amazing to think how this animal--man--ever came to count and learned how to write the alphabet. That's why I stress the classical education, the humanities. It's a place where man comes to know himself. "What a piece of work is a man." And you don't discover that until you discover the great questions of life such as are there things worth dying dor? Why would a warrior stake his life and his career on a single combat? Wherein lie the rights of others? (Lynass: 12 April, 1977). When do you die for your country? When do you die for an idea? From whom do

you take your orders? How much evil do you tolerate?

> If a student learns to read on three levels, that is, the literal, the figurative, and goes on to the symbolic, he has mastered the art of educating himself; and that's our whole purpose (Lynass: 29 March, 1977). If the atmosphere is good and the teacher can involve the student in an experience where he discovers the joy of learning, not only does learning take place but the student surpasses the teacher (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

Lynass' formulation of the ideal school, a definition of the school as an agent of change, is not surprising considering her early experience with enterprise and with the progressive influence of The Faculty of Education at the time that she attended. Unlike Rieger's, Lynass' ideal school is not necessarily based upon harmony.

> Ideally, teachers should not only be leaders, they should be trouble makers. They should be the people who are questioning society at all times. They should be examining the new, the fresh ideas and leading the community to look at them. They should be examining the new as well as the old literature. They should be encouraging students to have ideas about politics, health, and morality. They should not only be leaders; they should be instigators (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

Again, Lynass hearkens to the past, specifically to her normal school experiences, in her description of the ideal teacher. Her view is a progressive one which stresses the importance of the child and of providing activities for the child.

> The ideal teacher to me is going back to Miss Fisher; that is, the ideal teacher has a genuine interest in people and is neither amazed by nor concerned about the idiosyncrasies of individuals but is, rather, delighted that

> on the journey there's tremendous variety. In elementary school, the ideal teacher would have to have a loving and generous personality. Every student must feel that Teacher likes him. There was a Mrs. Kostash at McKernan School. She taught grade two, and those grade twos loved her. I have never heard any of the children who had Mrs. Kostash who haven't rated her right up there with Mother. They all learned so much from her. She even had them going to the Jubilee Auditorium to hear music and to the Art Gallery to look at the pictures. It wasn't just her classroom that she was concerned about. She was concerned about the whole child. In high school, however, I would appreciate the person without any personality if he really knows the subject, has tolerance enough to teach it well, examines his teaching methods every time he examines a student's knowledge, and is prepared to give and to demand a fair deal (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

Like Buxton, Lynass turns to the past to find an example of the school that approaches the ideal. She proffers a detailed account in which a sense of purpose and experimentation on the part of teachers was fostered by the leadership of the principal.

> At Harry Ainlay in the sixties, we had a staff that was as innovative as it was humanly possible to find. Creative and expository writing were part of every class. If a student said that he needed grammar, he could drop out of his regular class and go to one teacher, who never had more than six students, for a period of five to ten days. If a student couldn't spell, he could drop out for three or four days and get the spelling rules straight before returning to class. We permitted students to move from one class to another and teachers to combine and to exchange classes (Lynass: 23 March, 1977).

> Much of the success of the school can be attributed to the principal, Wilf McLean, an extremely well-educated man who also had integrity. You could depend on his support if he felt you were sincere. You didn't need to be right. You only needed to be searching for what was right. He would give you the opportunity to experiment, to try, and it wasn't necessary that you succeed. What was necessary was that you strive to find something better than what you were doing and that you were willing to examine and admit defeat. Defeat was no crime in Harry Ainlay; in fact, it was almost enjoyable to fail because at least you knew what you were doing wrong. Wilf McLean's door was never closed, and he had ultimate faith in his staff (Lynass: 16 March, 1977).

Changes and Obstacles: A Revolutionary Program

As she moves from the ideal to a concentration upon the changes she would like to see, Lynass specifies radical changes in society and its schools. Her vision of change includes detailed attention to the humanities, technical and vocational education, school design, and teacher training. Lynass' program of change is predicated upon her convictions about the purpose of education and the importance of the child. She sees parents, industry, and the present system of education as barriers to good teaching. Lynass begins by emphasizing freedom and flexibility in school organization.

> I don't know how one would arrive at an ideal situation democratically, and democracy must be preserved. I should like to see teachers and students with more freedom. I don't mean freedom for students to smoke; I mean freedom to select which classes they would like to attend. I would like to see more variable timetabling. I can't

> see why school must go in at twenty after eight and finish at twenty after three. I see no objection to students beginning at noon and finishing at seven. We're not flexible enough, and I'm not sure that it's the teachers who aren't flexible. Perhaps, the parents would like breakfast, lunch, and the evening meal always at the same time. There should also be greater flexibility in the standards we use; that is, someone going to university needs quite a different standard from someone who elects a form of labour (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

Advocating that the present system of education is inequitable, Lynass proposes alternatives which she is convinced would make learning more meaningful for the child.

> The public system as it is now has got to go (Lynass: 4 April, 1977). There's an inequity in schools trying to be all things to all people: in the school where you have thirty-five students in social studies, you may have six in industrial arts or eight in motor mechanics (Lynass: 23 March, 1977). The system is not educating the elite, and it's not making room for the average. The whole educational system is set up to be cruel to children.
>
> No child should take part in formal education until he has finished his physical growth; that is, children in the elementary schools should be with either not-so-professional people or with real professional people, one or the other, who let the child discover the wonders of the world, in small groups of twelve to fifteen. The river bank is full of insects, birds, mushrooms, plantain, water rivulets: everything in nature is down there in the river valley for just going inquiring about it. There's the University Farm. There is the idea of letting the child use his imagination to music. I saw children one time doing creative dance to one of those old gramophones that you wound up. One child stopped with her arms out.

> When the teacher asked her what the matter was, she said, "I've run down. You've got to wind me up." The teacher went over, pretended to wind up her back, and the little girl started dancing again. Learning should be like it used to be on the farm when the child took part in the everyday wonders of the world and discovered what it was all about. A child who chews a quarter of a cup of wheat till it becomes gluten would understand the chemistry of food. A child should be able to grate a potato into water, and see the starch go to the bottom; he should be able to shake cream till it becomes butter. The teacher then shows the child that that is the chemistry of nature. When the teacher demonstrates that a cucumber can become a dill pickle if it is put into the right brine, the child will understand the chemistry of man. The only time children should ever sit down is when they're tired, and then it need not be in a chair (Lynass: 4 April, 1977).

For older children, Lynass, in general, proposes a variety of programs and opportunities. She contends that not only would her recommendations cut costs, they would also be more in line with the future.

> Children are supposed to be in school until they're sixteen, but it's the most uncomfortable place in God's earth for certain young people: it is more inhumane than a jail sentence. It's for those people that I would suggest they should have the right to another type of training altogether, and there should be a wide variety: apprenticeship for some, a program modelled on the idea of a Civil Conservation Corps for others who really want to get out and find out what it is like to work in the forests or the parks. They should be paid a minimum wage because no one can argue that untrained labour is as valuable as trained; I don't think it would be any more expensive than keeping them in school. Today, children have the fewest rights of any group.

> It seems to me that we could cut the cost of education by fifty percent if we let everybody quit school at the end of grade nine and come back in when they were ready and if, up to grade nine, we treated the schools more like Parks and Recreation. That would be part of the complete adjustment of education to fit the structure of the twenty-first century where cybernetics is going to play a large part and let us play the part of "what a piece of work is a man" (Lynass: 4 April, 1977).

More specifically, for the academically able, Lynass envisions private schools with a classical humanities curriculum.

> My magic wand would certainly bring private schools into being. They would be private schools which offered the old curriculum of language which included Latin; and everybody would have to do a certain amount of math and science. That is, it would be a private school from which students came out prepared to broaden their education at university. I don't know what I'd do for money. I'm not sure money's the solution anyway. I think it's a change of view: stop educating everybody in the same old pattern (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

Lynass is emphatic, however, that technology makes the humanities an even more crucial concern for the future.

> As for technology and the humanities, more specialized technicians will be machines running machines, computers programmed to program other computers, which they can do so much faster than people. But the human mind must still know how to count, must still know that George Orwell was right in what can be done as soon as words are controlled and literature is destroyed. It's only those who understand the past who can hope to build for the future; and anything that man can do scientifically, he can program a computer to do better and faster. Definitely, those people at the

> top who can program the computers will be intellectually elite; but unless they have examined the humanities, they will never ask the question, wherein lies morality? We've got to come to grips with the question. Are we going to shoot our atomic fall-out into the atmosphere? Space is vast, but wherein lie our rights? Have we any right to go ahead with our atomic-energy programs if we have not first solved the problem of atomic waste? Einstein was concerned about those problems. Therefore, we need humanities more now than ever before, or nightmares such as cloning will become a reality. It won't be "What a piece of work is a man," it'll be men programmed as computers. Oh, no! (Lynass: 12 April, 1977)

The high schools which Lynass envisions would include only those, young or old, who are eager to learn. Vocational training she would return to private enterprise.

> I would want, then, the high schools to have only two groups of people in them: the student who had demonstrated his desire to learn through books, and adults. I would relieve the school of all reluctant learners, recognizing that when they were adults, they could come back and make no apologies. I wouldn't exclude anyone, but I couldn't fancy just anyone wanting to come to a school of the kind I would have. I would have private schools as high schools, and I would turn all the vocational subjects back to industry or free enterprise; that is, the business schools would take students from age thirteen, and the vocational schools, that teach motor mechanics, aircraft design, pipeline workers, would take students from age thirteen. I would permit students to change if they wished, but they would pay a certain sum. Education would cease to be free at age twelve or thirteen (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

Explaining elitism as a fallacy, Lynass contends that her ideal and futuristic program, which would provide different ways of educating children, is not elitist.

> I don't see this as an elitist position. Elitism is a public fallacy. There are as many educated fools as there are born fools. The mind that can take education deserves to be finely honed. An idea should make an intellectual mind hum and sing, but that does not make that person one bit better than the person who works with his hands. What it does is to fit him into an opportunity for personal pride and happiness. I agree with Burns: "Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord." There are fools with titles and fools without. This idea of elitism comes out of our peasant background here in a relatively new country. We have set up a caste system just as rigid as those we complain about because if a person is getting a good salary, we judge him a successful man when he might be a most unhappy individual. There's only one elite in this world: the contented mind (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

The revamping of education, according to Lynass, would include not only redesigning schools but changing the attitudes of parents and of employers as well.

> I would redesign all the schools. We have to move into the use of the electronic material we have in education; therefore, I would like to see schools equipped with very efficient V.T.R.'s, projectors, and cameras. I would like to change the whole attitude of parents. I would wave my magic wand so that parents accepted children with their limitations and did not expect miracles. I would change the whole employment situation so that employment depended not upon what grade was passed but upon why the employee wished the job and what he was prepared to do in order to succeed because I'm not convinced a grade-twelve education

> makes a better garage mechanic than a grade-eight education. It's the character of the individual (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

To complete her program of sweeping change, Lynass would improve teacher qualifications and training. Like Rieger and Buxton, Lynass would concentrate upon practical experience for teachers. Her change in this area, however, would include the disappearance of The Faculty of Education.

> I would want the qualifications of the teachers to be a Master's Degree which followed a general Arts Degree, whether in the sciences or the fine arts, but a degree broad enough for the appreciation of the thinking of mankind in literature, philosophy, history, math, science, and anthropology. At the end of the Arts Degree, some more specialized facet of study should be selected for the Master's Degree.
>
> I would like to see The Faculty of Education disappear as a separate faculty and teacher training to be an apprenticeship training. I would like administrators to be teachers first. No one should be permitted to take a Ph.D. in administration; he should take a Ph.D. in a discipline, but a discipline greatly expanded at the base. I don't think he should start in chemistry in his first year of university and get a Ph.D. in chemistry if he's going into the schools. I would grant him the right to teach the subject he wanted to teach, but he should have a broad base from which to teach it. He should understand that the human equations examined by such as Shakespeare, Pinter, and Anouilh are much more fascinating than any algebraic equations (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

The Future: A Socratic-Cybernetic System

From her consideration of the improvements needed in education, Lynass turns to look into the future. Predicting little immediate change, she perceives a movement toward private schools.

> I see a great change over a number of years, but I don't see it on the short term. I don't expect much change in the next few years. We're wrapped up in money. Schools want cost accounting. In the next ten years, there'll be a gradual shift away from public education into a demand for more private education and to a demand for less-costly education. Change will depend on money and upon the public attitude changing (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

Lynass is provocative in her prophecy of the nature of education in the centuries to come. She visualizes an intriguing Socratic-cybernetic tutorial system.

> In the long-term prediction, we're going to have almost a Socratic system of education. Those who are academically talented will be taught almost on an individual basis, maybe in groups of six, eight, twelve. The computer will do the tedious things for us. In the elementary school, everyone will be taught up to a certain level. Only those who are exceptional will need anything more than teaching through television. I can see the television being used in the same way that the afternoon television show is used now to teach those of that mind. The three or eight percent will need near geniuses to teach them, and they will be well taught. Cybernetics will not be overlooked. Machines will be used intelligently. There are some features of education that cannot be presented better than by film. I saw a film, for example, at the University on the Van Allen belt in electricity. 'Twas beautiful. It all came clear. I don't know, however, what will be done about this matter of the

communal spirit if you can sit at home and get your education. There will have to be, at least up to the age of twelve, a tremendously effective physical-education program. There will have to be more recreational facilities for people over twelve. I can see mass education being largely vocational and physical education. For those who are going to get a classic education, they're going to be few, well taught; and the teachers will have almost a tutorial system.

> How desirable is the future? Remember Tennyson?
>
> When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see
> Saw the vision of the world and the wonder that could be.

The last picture hasn't been painted. The last journey into space hasn't been taken. I have great faith that anyone living in the twenty-second century will look back on us primitives the way we look back on Ulysses. It's a fascinating world to speculate about; but before I ask myself that question, I ask myself what I really look like to my dog, and I wonder if my vision of the future isn't just as limited as his vision of me or, better still, how I look to an ant when he crawls over my foot. Maybe, I'm the ant looking into the future (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

SUMMARY

Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass in their speculations about the ideal and the future in education are sensitive to present societal and educational shortcomings and inadequacies which are barriers to progress. Rieger identifies governmental inaction as well as inequity among schools as sources of difficulty. Buxton and Lynass call for changes in the attitudes of society, teachers, parents, and students. Each of the three educators suggests improvements. Their views are informed by their

convictions about the best purposes of education and by their commitment to education. Rieger believes in progress which will liberate human potential in a technological society; Buxton and Lynass place faith in the humanities as a key to self-fulfillment and progress. For Buxton and Lynass, the past provides examples of successful schools. Perhaps, there are solutions to present problems or directions for the future in these examples. The ideals of the three teachers, tempered by reality, are accessible of approach even though the approach may call for thought and energy.

Harmony; co-operative human enterprise; recognition of the dignity, worth, and variety of the individual; joy in learning; the value of intellectual or other achievement; and the alleviation of injustice and inequity are some of the values which inform the three teachers' vision of society and its schools. From their experiences, the three recognize schools which adhere and those which do not adhere to values such as these. It would not be excessive to believe that those kinds of schools which do adhere to the values could exist at present and in the future. Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass have outlined some of the ways by which schools now and in the future could move closer to the ideal. Better teacher training; more effective teachers; positive community involvement; a change in attitude of the government toward education; a sense of direction and confidence on the part of teachers; some changes in school programs, design, and standards; a rejection of narrow elitist education; a suspicion of over-specialization; more and different kinds of educational opportunity for all are not beyond the possible. Resident in these speculations is an optimistic reaffirmation

of human freedom and responsibility.

In the visions of the future put forth by the three educators is the faith that man will not succumb in his societal and educational organization to mechanistic slavery but will, rather, be capable of progress predicated upon a synthesis of technological, scientific progress and humanist ideals. There is, however, a clear implication that if a better world and better schools are to be achieved, it will be by the exercise of discipline and responsibility by society and teachers. Rieger's views here can best be summarized in his own words.

> I have always felt that opportunities were not equal, probably they never can be; but they can be improved. I continued in education until I retired; I firmly believed in what I was doing. I really do believe other people are serious and sincere and have good will, until it is proven otherwise to me. It's easy to be a critic in the sense of just finding fault; it's much harder to propose something better. Maybe there must be more communication among teachers. A person needs constant effort to keep his perspective in perspective (Rieger: 2 March, 1977): when you think that so much progress can be made in forty years, why, it makes one hopeful (Rieger: 9 March, 1977).

Buxton's eloquence also speaks for itself as his words about purpose in education sweep to include science, mathematics, history, sociology, and literature.

> The student should not be held within the boundaries that he has created for himself when, actually, you want to enlarge his boundaries. You want to, if you like, take him out onto a mountain top and have him look at the world to see where man has been, his problems, and his solutions to the problems in science, in mathematics, and in history.

You want the student to look at the changes man has made in his kind of government in the long trek toward democracy in Europe, in Britain, in the United States, and in France. How is he going to learn about these things unless he is introduced to them? I've dwelled at some length on this because the point is vital that youngsters aren't jugs to be filled so that the contents can be poured out on some examination. Students are minds to be challenged. Education is the gathering and assessing of ideas, of man's questioning, of his achievements in measuring things in mathematics, of his discovery of the principles that cause things to happen in science. To return to my previous image, education is like sitting on a mountain top and seeing where man has been, the road he has travelled. It is man's questioning about himself and his society, in history, in sociology, and in literature. What it is all about is the question to which students should address themselves (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

And Lynass extends her optimism and faith into space and infinity.

Why has man got such a brain? That is, the computer is insignificant in comparison with the human brain. It's fascinating just to speculate. I wonder if the shape of man will change if he ever gets into outer space. He'd have no use for his legs while he was out there. In space, maybe we could communicate through extra-sensory perception. Maybe the language we really want to learn is not French or German or Ukrainian, but inter-terrestrial Esperanto. Let's stop thinking of man just here on earth. There are all the possibilities in outer space, but there's another possibility: maybe it's time we started learning to communicate with the whales and dolphins. Maybe they do speak, and maybe the Romantics weren't wrong. I ask myself why the whale definitely has the suggestion of legs

in its bone structure. Oh, there are so many things I would like to see, but won't. I'm very optimistic about the future. Unless, of course some fool spoils everything, but somewhere man would start again. I believe in infinity (Lynass: 12 April, 1977).

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Changing Schools: Progress Toward Universal Education

Now and again, a few twentieth-century Albertans make their way among hoodoos and rabbits to Writing on Stone Provincial Park and look at the rock walls upon whose surface appear petroglyphs, faint scratchings barely perceptible after wind and rain and tourists. The petroglyphs are a puzzling communication from an ancient civilization. The juxtaposition of the messages added by later visitors acts ironically to heighten the tension between past and present, spray paint as appropriate a symbol of the twentieth century as any. The prairie, which must have seemed immutable to its first inhabitants, has changed as western civilization has added its monuments, imperceptibly and gradually at first and with increasing momentum as Alberta moves closer to the twenty-first century.

On the highway between Calgary and Edmonton, a road sign points to the hills from which Anthony Henday first saw the mountains--another reminder of Alberta's history. In the years after Henday, exploration gave way to exploitation followed by the advent of justice for this world and the next as administered by the mounted police and prophesied by the clergy. With the homesteaders, Alberta settled for a time into an agrarian era before its aggressive embrace of oil, industry, technology, and money.

The changing schools mirror the pattern of historical development and political activity as mission schools were superseded by the ungraded schools which, in turn, were replaced by sprawling composite schools. The kinds of schools established in the province after Henday's first sight of it reflect with some fidelity the traditions, values, and beliefs of those who built them.

The recollections of Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton form a detailed record of change and achievement in Alberta society and its schools from 1909 to 1977 within the context of the dream of universal education. The three teachers reveal the early influences upon them in their homes, communities, and schools as well as the later influences--historical, political, economical, and educational--as they struggled to learn and to teach. The communities and schools of their childhood were closely knit: chin wags at rehearsals for the sports days and the community picnic at the school fairs. At home, parents read, conversed, and commented on school activities; children did homework, listened to Fibber McGee and Molly, and read The Books of Knowledge. At school they worked to earn the Public School Leaving Diploma, memorized poetry, graduated from grade eleven to work in a bank or a store or worked to master grade twelve. They left Delia, Delburne, and Lougheed to find chemistry and inspiration at the University, and practical instruction, programmes, or awesome instructors in the normal schools.

In the Alberta of the twenties, the dream of universal education was only partially realized: most aspired and many failed to achieve the grade-eight certificate, but the schools taught girls as well as boys. The academic programs offered little for students whose aims

were neither university education nor school teaching. Perren Baker fought his government to provide more and better schools, and lost. Teachers were reluctant to teach in rural schools until the Department's largesse furnished incentive and provided temporary respite from the poverty of the Depression.

Teaching in the Depression years meant poverty; ill-equipped schools; ingenuity; enterprise; young, inadequately prepared teachers; primitive living conditions; professional isolation; and the vagaries of local boards and inspectors. Ten months of endeavour in one-room schools and summer sessions in July and August formed the pattern of life for the dedicated teacher in the thirties.

Meanwhile the reformers devoted time and effort in the continuing pursuit of universal education. Barnett, assisted by Newland and LaZerte, took leadership away from the educational establishment (school board and Department of Education members) to change pedagogues to professionals. Newland had the professionals contending in their classrooms and in summer schools with the progressive philosophy and methods of enterprise or activity learning in his envisaged transformation of education from emphasis upon rigid curriculum to emphasis upon the child. Newland also gathered teachers into private professional organizations in Edmonton and Calgary. LaZerte directed his progressive energies into making teachers professionals by establishing The Faculty of Education. Aberhart aggressively legislated progress and professionalism into being: the large unit, The Alberta Teachers' Association, The Faculty of Education, and teacher welfare. T.C. Byrne (McIntosh and Bryce, 1977: 105) sums up the vision of education in the thirties.

> The . . . people I listened to in the '30's . . . were intellectual progressives, outstanding scholars who pioneered this century-old movement toward mass education. These men had a vision of what the school might do for society . . . . These men had conviction. They were confident that education could equalize, democratize, bring universal well-being to society; it was a conviction that brought purpose to teachers and teaching. This conviction was the basis for progressivism, the enterprise program, social studies, comprehensive high schools, community colleges and a whole range of reforms that formed part of this century's history.

War came and teachers left Alberta classrooms to teach and learn in the Armed Services or to work in industry. Those who stayed in the classrooms were poorly paid and frozen in deteriorating schools. Teacher training reverted to a mode reminiscent of the normal schools. Untrained sitters staffed many schools.

Although the War years offered a temporary reversal in the fortunes of progress and professionalism, the set-back did not lead to despair or abandonment of the dream. In the years following the War, teachers worked in The Alberta Teachers' Association, in The Faculty of Education, in the classrooms--and even entered local government--to try to solve the problems of the War years: overcrowded schools, lack of teachers, growing need for native education, and insufficient educational financing to build schools and alleviate disparity.

The post-war years and the prosperous fifties and sixties saw immense progress toward the ideal of education for all Albertans in large schools filled with professional teachers. The Association undertook research and supported internship in its drive to improve education. The Faculty, in the midst of emergency teacher preparation, yet found time to advocate progressive attitudes. Edmontonians voted for a school board comprised in large part of educators who promised and promoted

better education. Classroom teachers experimented with new approaches to teaching and learning. By the end of the sixties, the progressive dream seemed almost within reach. The work of many, Baker, Aberhart, McNally, Barnett, Newland, LaZerte, countless teachers in the universities as well as outside them--and the work of Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass--had helped to transform education.

Alberta Education in the Seventies: The Fortunes of Progressivism

In 1966, Premier Manning led the Social Credit party to victory; in 1971, Peter Lougheed defeated Harry Strom to end the Social Credit regime in Alberta. Since then, the Lougheed government has been promising to take care of education, a statement which in itself presupposes that education is a matter of some concern. The discussions with Rieger, Buxton, and Lynass lend considerable credence to the idea that the schools in the seventies have lost faith in themselves and that society has lost faith in its schools.

Factors which emerge from the three educators' analyses of current issues, expressions of the ideal, statements of desirable future directions, and considerations of obstacles to progress in education include a lack of provincial leadership, a sense of professional inadequacy, general societal malaise, and a movement toward traditionalism and tighter control of education.

Rieger finds the motivations and educational attitudes of the provincial government incomprehensible, especially in its refusal to provide the necessary and affordable level of financial support and in its general disinterest in education. In a similar vein, Lynass is

critical of professional educators at the provincial level from whose formulations of programs she concludes that education "has become an occupational disease" (Lynass: 29 March, 1977). There is little educational activity discernible at the provincial government level which would address Rieger's and Lynass' concerns.

Whatever the nature of governmental leadership at present or in the future, it is apparent that educators themselves have done little to foster faith in the schools. Buxton and Lynass are explicit, especially in their statements that educators have promised too much too blithely and accepted responsibility for goals that they are incapable of realizing. Teachers appear to have lost confidence in their subjects and in their methods.

Societal values appear to find expression at worst in a kind of materialistic frenzy of acquisition in a mood of guilty gloom or self-indulgent indifference. At best, there seems to be little but an attempt to find salvation by adopting some one scheme that would produce a province of motivated students eager to read, write, and spell correctly. Students, however, display a tendency to reflect societal values or to reject them by contemptuous retreat from society. Trapped in large impersonal schools which make the individual feel a cypher, students are uneasily persuaded that they must stay for the diploma that is a passport to freedom and wealth. The society seems directionless except in acquisitiveness. Its schools, staffed with teachers who are uncertain themselves, display an obsessive fixation upon time and organization. Schools start at 8:03 or 8:26. Programs are crowded into five months. Teachers are to teach a set number of minutes each week.

The variety of programs for students is largely illusory: students must fit themselves into preconceived courses which allow for the expression of a narrow range of human talent and ability.

Schools are caught in their own institutionalization and in a criticism which is as destructive as it is questionably motivated and informed. Faced with large numbers of disaffected students and with critics on all sides, it is not surprising that teachers who are motivated by a faith in education feel that they have no support. The main purpose of schools appears to have become a holding one.

Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton speak for those teachers who, as Byrne (McIntosh and Bryce, 1977: 105) says, want "not only to work in an institution but to believe in it as well." Each of the three educators expresses faith in education as a way of realizing human potential and progress in civilization. Each also voices concern about some aspect of the current dissatisfaction with the schools, especially the back-to-the-basics issue and its implications for education.

Dissatisfaction with the schools is undoubtedly a healthy sign; yet the dominant attitude of educational reform which finds common expression in a return to the basics and an increased control over curriculum by means of external examinations needs careful appraisal. The scrutiny is crucial because while reform is desirable, the basics movement carries certain overtones of authoritarianism which cannot be a happy way of solving educational problems in the complex world of the latter part of this century.

Much has been said recently which attempts to root present problems in the progressive movement. It has become almost commonplace

to liken education in Alberta to an oscillation along a spectrum whose extremes can be broadly labelled traditional and progressive. It is an action-reaction view of education which holds that progressivism held sway from the mid-thirties to the sixties when reaction once more began to set in; presumably, the traditionalists are now in the ascendancy. It is this perceived motion which has undoubtedly given rise to the familiar description of education which uses the figure of the pendulum. Recently, for example, Stan Maertz and Dr. S.C.T. Clarke, at a convention held in Edmonton, addressed their audiences within this context. The ATA News on March 31, "Speakers Chart Back-to-Basics Movement," (1976: 5) reported the speeches given by Maertz and Clarke.

> The temper of the times seems to be conservative. For the schools, this translates into a call for "the basics." Two speakers charted the pendulum's swing back . . . . Educational reform in the past few years went too far, Mr. Maertz maintained. "We have been experiencing an era wherein the student has been 'king' . . . . I believe this trend has peaked and the emphasis is being blunted."

In his speech, Clarke referred to the public now being somewhat desirous of a return to stricter discipline of students.

Noel Somerville, Edmonton Public Local President at the time, addressed the 1976 Annual Representative Assembly of The Alberta Teachers' Association. Somerville is quoted in The ATA News on April 20, "Assembly Comes Close to Throwing Out Accreditation Resolutions," (1976: 2) as saying, "I supported the move to abandon departmentals. I have had to change my mind . . . because I have seen an erosion of curriculum and . . . standards . . . . The pendulum has swung too far."

Proponents of the pendulum theory posit that as educational movements or leaders of either ilk gain in ascendancy, there is a

followership phenomenon which has been called the band-wagon approach to education. Those who advocate the theory will have it that as the pendulum reaches either extreme, reaction sets in; and the pendulum begins its swing toward the opposite extreme.

It is an interesting metaphor and a superficially reassuring one. It holds the promise that traditional and progressive stances are easily identifiable and mutually exclusive. It is suggestive of order and of control. Assuming its truth, either traditional or progressive can derive solace, for his day will assuredly come. There is a charm in its intimations of nothing new under the sun. Its engaging naïveté renders it appealing to many members of the public and to many educators, in general, to those who are prone to view education with just such a tragi-comic simplicity coupled with historical unconsciousness or indifference. It is undoubtedly behind the militantly wistful vociferousness of the back-to-the-basics issue, perhaps the most readily recognizable trend in education at present.

Under closer scrutiny, however, some disturbing ramifications also emerge. Implicit is the view that educational thought is capricious, governed somehow by the vagaries of chance. It denies professional cohesiveness in its tendency toward adoption of adversary positions, yet neutralizes the possibility of fruitful confrontation by encouraging passivity. Ultimately, it becomes a machine-view of education, a perpetual-motion machine which is capable neither of stopping nor of progress.

It is a dangerous metaphor for other reasons, as well, in that it can obscure some vital questions and ignore important issues. More

evidence is necessary before it can be wholly accepted that either extreme progressivism or extreme traditionalism ever has found, ever will find, or ever should find uniform acceptance and expression in Alberta pedagogical practice. The best case for extreme progressivism having found common acceptance can probably be made for that unhappy child of progressivism, the enterprise method: it, however, was restricted to the elementary schools; and, in view of confusion, misinterpretation, lack of resources, and, no doubt, its detractors, it is difficult to say to what degree or for how long progressive methodology applied in Alberta schools. Swift (1959: 61), as a matter of fact, suggests that during the fifties, when the progressivists were supposedly predominant, he detected a trend toward traditionalism.

> There has been some tendency . . . towards return to formality . . . due in part, alas, to a realization that . . . we have not had a teaching staff of the competence, education, training, and perhaps the energy, to implement what for a time was thought to be the ideal sort of program.

Furthermore, even if it is admitted that one philosophy or other is predominant at any given time, there is no evidence to suggest that perceived ills or shortcomings in the educational system may necessarily be laid at its door.

The concern expressed by Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton is probably reflective of an attitude that philosophical positions such as traditionalism and progressivism are most likely misunderstood and that there is a tendency for discussion of them to degenerate into polarization and name calling which can be barriers to progress. Rieger points out that people who express the desire to return to the basics appear to have no trust in human potential and progress; Lynass indicates that

immersion is another name for enterprise; and Buxton elaborates upon labelling.

> In the fifties we began to attach labels. You were a traditionalist or a progressivist. Anything that was wrong was labelled progressive education and everything that suggested a more organized approach was labelled traditionalist. I think the labels are too restrictive; that is, they don't give the whole picture. It's too easy to attach a label (Buxton: 20 April, 1977).

The three educators would most likely agree that extremism, either progressive or traditional, can result in rigid control.

Rather than applying careless labels, it makes more sense to view those who worked most arduously to reform Alberta education as complex men and women who proceeded on the basis that free schools in a free society require brave assumptions and teachers with convictions. An examination of some of these assumptions and convictions may be of more use in establishing new directions than the unseemly professional quarrelling which Dr. J.R. Kidd (1966: 33-34) warns against.

> Too often there has been estrangement, even suspicion, among the individuals who are responsible for education . . . . Instead of most of us recognizing that all was not well with education and that each of us shared in some manner the guilt and responsibility, some of us began to revile each other, shout epithets at each other, and shake in glee when some of our number were under attack. Of course, there should always be frank criticism as well as rigorous self-examination by people engaged in education. But at the same time we must learn to bear one another's burdens, not crow at one another's distresses. Only when we all realize that we are members of one educational family, even the lowly teachers, or the lowly administrators or school trustees, or whomever you happen to think is lowliest, will we work together co-operatively for human fulfilment.

Those committed to improving education believe that the individual is various and valuable, especially in his individuality. The improvement

of education also calls for a program that would actively seek to teach the student that he is a worth-while individual human being, that others are also various and valuable, and that the student is a member of several interlocking worlds, about which the student needs both knowledge and awareness. The individual is a member of a world which has a record of its achievements--historical, literary, philosophical, geographical, scientific, mathematical, anthropological. He is a member of a society which influences him and which he also influences. He inhabits not only a phenomenological world which has beauty and utility but also a metaphysical world whether it is defined as a world of cosmic unknowability or in adherence to a specific creed. Every student can and must know about these worlds, but he also needs sensitivity and responsibility to them. He needs not only language but acuity. He must know himself, strive to become his best self--unique, responsive, and curious. Teachers need not only knowledge but humility, tolerance, and optimistic perspective: if wisdom is to come it will come slowly; perhaps even a lifetime is too short. But wisdom will come not at all if the individual is disenfranchised from learning. Impatience and narrow views lead to the provision of education only for those adjudged academically elite and to condescending captivity for the majority.

Ideal and New Directions in Alberta Education

The directions for an approach to the ideal and to the future in education set forth by Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton form a powerful challenge for those who are pessimistic about society and education. Those who would accept the challenge must look to the past to see if

there are solutions which can be adopted. They must have conviction and patience as well as knowledge. They must be able to view the present clearly and to work for change guided not only by historical understanding but also by an optimistic vision of the future.

Clearly, societal expectations and judgment of the schools must be re-examined, a re-examination which would include programs, school organization, evaluation procedures, and practical research. Progress in the future would also call for a reassessment of societal values; parental, teacher, and student attitudes; the role of the humanities; and the large composite schools. A future in which technology is to play an important part must try to avoid dehumanization. The vision of education advanced by Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton, predicated upon principles such as harmony, realization of individual worth, humility, and co-operative intellectual inquiry, demands teachers who approach teaching as an art. It is a concept which can be derived by substituting "teaching" for "poetry" in Carl Sandburg's poem, "Ten Definitions of Poetry" (Untermeyer, 1950: 214).

1 Poetry is a projection across silence of cadences arranged to break that silence with definite intentions of echoes, syllables, wave lengths.
2 Poetry is the journal of a sea animal living on land, wanting to fly the air.
3 Poetry is a series of explanations of life, fading off into horizons too swift for explanations.
4 Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable.
5 Poetry is a theorem of a yellow-silk handkerchief knotted with riddles, sealed in a balloon tied to the tail of a kite flying in a white wind against a blue sky in spring.
6 Poetry is the silence and speech between a wet struggling root of a flower and a sunlit blossom of that flower.
7 Poetry is the harnessing of the paradox of earth cradling life and then entombing it.

8 Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away.
9 Poetry is the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits.
10 Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during a moment.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY BY USE OF THE INTERVIEW APPROACH

The consideration of the nature of education, past, present, ideal, and future, according to the perceptions of three Alberta educators of note has provided much new information and insight; but it also points to areas where new information or more intensive knowledge can be sought, especially by using the oral history approach of the present study. Rieger, Lynass, and Buxton have referred to many people who have contributed to Alberta education and about whom little is known. There are current educators of recognized stature in Alberta who can provide accounts of their encounters with some of the people who have contributed to education in the province. These people would include: early inspectors, such as McLean, Le Blanc, and Hay; former normal-school instructors, such as Fisher and Dickie; members of The Faculty of Education, such as Smith, Coutts, Pilkington, Gillies, Hampson, Sparby, Simpson, and Jonason; members of The Faculty of Arts and Science, such as Broadus, Salter, Mardiros, Thomas, Wonders, Forrest, and McCalla; Ministers and Deputy-Ministers of Education, such as Baker, Aalborg, and Swift; and educators such as Clarke, Ainlay, Ronning, and Garrison. To this list could be added the historian and biographer, John Chalmers. Some of these educators might, themselves, consent to being interviewed. More information about such well-known educators as Aberhart, Newland,

Barnett, McNally, and LaZerte could also come to light through interviews with current educators. The history of The Banff School of Fine Arts and the people who worked to establish it could be usefully studied in a similar way. Another possible area of investigation would be The Faculty of Education demonstration school. Studies could also be based upon perceptions of educators about issues--within the context of past, present, ideal, or future--such as provincial government leadership in education; research; effect of societal, parental, teacher, and student attitudes and expectations upon education; community involvement in education; kinds and effects of criticism upon schools, teachers, and students; selection procedures for The Faculty of Education; internship and teacher competence; progressivism and traditionalism in Alberta schools; inequities in the educational system; goals, purposes, and effects of school programs, organizations, and evaluation. The dissatisfaction with large schools, the possibility or the desirability of establishing a variety of public schools or of creating private and separate schools could form valuable areas of investigation through an interview approach. An especially provocative topic would be a study of teachers who were themselves students in the overcrowded schools of the post-war years to see if and how their perceptions of education differ from those of earlier or later teachers. Another intriguing possibility would be to attempt to determine whether or not vocational and technical training could or should be returned to private enterprise, according to the perceptions of noteworthy educators. Comparative studies among older teachers, younger teachers, and students may also have some merit.

The chief recommendation, however, arising from the present study

is that agencies such as The Alberta Teachers' Association, The Department of Education, The Alberta School Trustees' Association, The University of Alberta, and school boards, particularly the large urban boards which have research staff, could devote their energies or commission researchers to explore the lives and thoughts of Alberta educators whose contributions to education should not cease upon their retirement from the schools of the province.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE WITH RIEGER, LYNASS, AND BUXTON

9503 - 52 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
December 31, 1976.

Dear Mr. Rieger:

You may, perhaps, recall that last summer we briefly discussed an idea I had for a Master's thesis. I am now working toward completion of my program in The Department of Secondary Education (English) at The University of Alberta. I am still interested (and have the support of my adviser, Dr. John Oster) in working on a thesis which would involve interviewing three highly regarded Alberta educators. More explicitly, my study would entail exploring the professional lives as well as the thoughts of these three educators to discover their insights into where we are in education, how we arrived here, and where we go from here. I am writing to ask you if you would honour me by agreeing to be one of the three.

I should explain that my proposal has not yet been formally accepted, but it is necessary for me to have your permission before I can proceed further with the proposal. If you do agree and if the proposal is accepted, the study would involve a personal interview with you.

I have enclosed a stamped and self-addressed envelope which you may find convenient for your reply. Also, if you would like further information I am home most evenings after six. My phone number is 466-9548: I would be delighted to hear from you.

Yours most cordially,

Phyllis M.E. La Fleur

9503 - 52 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
December 31, 1976.

Dear Miss Lynass:

I am now working toward completion of a Master's program in The Department of Secondary Education (English) at The University of Alberta. I am interested in working on a thesis which would involve interviewing three highly regarded Alberta educators. My adviser is Dr. John Oster. My study would involve exploring the professional lives as well as the thoughts of these three educators to discover their insights into where we are in education, how we arrived here, and where we go from here. I am writing to ask you if you would honour me by agreeing to be one of the three whom I would interview.

I should explain that my proposal has not yet been formally accepted, but it is necessary for me to have your permission before I can proceed further with the proposal. If you do agree and if the proposal is accepted, the study would entail a personal interview with you.

I have enclosed a stamped and self-addressed envelope which you may find convenient for your reply. Also, if you would like further information, I am home most evenings after six. My phone number is 466-9548: I would be delighted to hear from you.

Yours most cordially,

Phyllis M.E. La Fleur

9503 - 52 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
December 31, 1976

Dear Dr. Buxton:

Earlier this month, upon my importuning him, Dr. Bell was kind enough to give me your address in California. I hope that you have found sunshine, palm-trees, and relaxation in splendid profusion; and I regret to intrude academic concerns upon you.

Perhaps you recall that last spring we briefly discussed the idea I had for a Master's thesis. Upon further consideration and with the support of my adviser, Dr. John Oster, I have concluded that the idea should be pursued. My study would involve exploring the professional lives as well as the thoughts of three highly regarded Alberta educators to discover their insights into where we are in education, how we arrived here, and where we go from here. I am writing to ask you if you would honour me by agreeing to be one of the three.

I should explain that my proposal has not yet been formally accepted, but it is necessary for me to have your permission before I can proceed further with the proposal. If you do agree and if the proposal is accepted, the study would entail a personal interview with you. (I have been given to understand that you will be returning to Edmonton in the spring.)

Yours most cordially,

Phyllis M.E. La Fleur

Thomas F. Rieger,
11704 - 41 Avenue,
Edmonton, Alberta.

January 4, 1977.

Dear Phyllis:

I am still quite happy to assist in your thesis topic and am willing to undergo the interview.

Although I spent some 40 years as a teacher, including seven years as an employee of the ATA, my experience was not as broad as it might have been. Many experiences I had over and over again. Also all my teaching was in small schools, in towns and villages.

In addition to my years as an employee of the ATA, I also served from 1947 to 1965 on the ATA Executive Council. Thus you may well imagine that my views may have an ATA bias.

I thought you should be aware of the above before you "signed me up."

Best wishes for your thesis.

Sincerely,

"Tom Rieger"

73 - 561 Broadmoor Drive
Thousand Palms, California 92276

January 12, 1977

Dear Phyllis:

I am not at all sure that I ought to be included in a category entitled "Alberta's Leading Educators." However, I shall be very happy to participate in your study by answering your questions about where we are in education, how we arrived there, and where we go from here, even though I don't pretend to have any earth-shaking answers. As you indicated in your letter, I plan to return to Edmonton about March 31, so that if your proposal is accepted we might have the interview any time that is convenient to you after that date.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Buxton and I are enjoying our stay in California. We have a very comfortable mobile (24 x 56), a heated pool and jacussi a hundred yards away, and golf course to keep us occupied. A delightful climate--every day the temperatures run between 65 and 75, and lots of bright sunshine. This retirement is great stuff.

I am glad John Oster is acting as your adviser. Give him my best regards. My best wishes for 1977, and Good Luck with your thesis.

Sincerely,

"Earl Buxton"

9503 - 52 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta.

February 9, 1977.

Dear Mr. Rieger:

Thank you for your prompt reply to my earlier letter and, most especially, for agreeing to participate in my project. Thank you, also, for your candid statement of bias vis-a-vis the A.T.A. and for the brief outline of your teaching experience. I must assure you that your teaching and your A.T.A. experience make you an excellent candidate for inclusion in the study.

I am sending you the schedule of interview questions as well as some brief excerpts from the proposal which refer to the statement of the problem and the procedures. I am also making the questions available to you ahead of time so that you can mull them over if you wish, to check with me if the questions are unclear, or to refer to other sources.

You will notice that the interview questions are general and open ended. Also, the questions fall under six major headings. It is these headings which are of paramount importance. The questions within each of the main headings are intended to provide direction and example--to avoid the describe-the-universe-in-fifty-words-or-fewer kind of question. While I would be delighted to have a detailed response to each item, such an expectation would undoubtedly exhaust your time and patience. I would consider it more likely that you would concentrate on those individual questions and topics which most interest you and which will, at the same time, provide me with sufficient information for each category; perhaps, for those which are not that intriguing you could provide very brief responses. I am hoping for sufficient information to result in a chapter of my thesis.

I would like to invite you to contribute (before, at the time of, or after the interview) any written or documentary material you may wish to have me either peruse or include as part of the thesis. For example, you may want to prepare a brief, written autobiography or perhaps you have an article which you wrote previously that might pertain. This written aspect is, of course, entirely voluntary.

. . . ./2

At this time, it is probably in order for me to ask if you will permit taping of the interview. Should you object, you can let me know at the time of the interview; and I will defer to your wishes. As well, you will have the opportunity of reading "your chapter" before it goes to final draft.

When you have had a chance to consider the questions, perhaps you could phone me (466-9548) so that we can arrange a suitable time.

Again, thank you for your co-operation; and I am looking forward to the interview.

Cordially,

Phyllis M.E. La Fleur

9503 - 52 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta.

February 9, 1977.

Dear Dr. Buxton:

Thank you for your letter of January 12, 1977 and, most especially, for agreeing to participate in my project. I have taken the liberty of further intruding upon your California idyll and have enclosed the schedule of interview questions. I have also included brief excerpts from the proposal which refer to the statement of the problem and the procedures.

The interview questions are general and open ended; they fall under six major headings. It is these headings which are of paramount importance. The questions within each of the main headings are intended to provide direction and example. While I would be delighted to have a detailed response to each item, such an expectation would undoubtedly impose upon your time and patience to an unreasonable degree. I would consider it more likely that you would concentrate on those topics which most interest you and which will, at the same time, provide me with sufficient information for each category. Perhaps, for those which are not that intriguing you could provide very brief responses. I am hoping that the information will ultimately result in a chapter of my thesis.

I would also like to invite you to contribute (before, at the time of, or after the interview) any written or documentary material you may wish to have me either peruse or include as part of the thesis. This written aspect is, of course, entirely voluntary.

At this time, it is probably in order for me to ask if you will permit the interview to be taped. Should you object, you can let me know at the time of the interview; and I will defer to your wishes. As well, you will have the opportunity of reading "your chapter" before it goes to final draft.

An interview at your convenience after your return will be entirely suitable: I have enough work to keep me going at least until then. I trust that any questions you may have prior to the interview can be settled after your return. I will be looking forward to seeing you and envying your California tan.

Cordially,

Phyllis M.E. La Fleur

APPENDIX B

REVISED SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

REVISED SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I. FACTUAL BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A. Parents and Family

B. Date of Birth

C. Place of Birth

D. Childhood

E. Public Schooling

F. Post-secondary Schooling

G. Employment

H. Activities

1. Professional Activities

2. Other Activities

3. Publications

II. PERCEPTUAL INFORMATION

A. Subjective Biographical Information

1. Who has influenced you significantly in your personal and professional life?

2. In retrospect, would you change anything in your professional life?

3. What was the most exciting or rewarding time or event in your professional career?

4. What major frustrations, obstacles, or conflicts did you encounter in your profession?

5. Who were your own teachers whom you regarded highly? In what ways did they influence you?
6. What originally motivated you to devote your life to education? Did this motivation change or remain a constant?
7. To what or to whom would you attribute your success?
8. What vision, if any, has informed you and sustained you?
9. How did you come to choose your subject field specialization? What have been the most exciting and/or disturbing developments in your subject field?
10. What do you consider to have been your major contributions to education in Alberta?
11. Were you involved in the development of innovative teaching techniques? Did you discover (adapt, modify) a method or methods of teaching that were successful?

B. Perceptions of the Present State of Education in Alberta

1. What major problems do you see Alberta teachers, children, and schools facing at present?
2. What do you consider to be the chief strengths and weaknesses of education in Alberta at present?
3. Do you think there is such a thing now as an Alberta philosophy of education? Has there ever been? Should there be?
4. What are your views of the goals of public education as stated in The Department of Education Program of Studies? Are they being adequately pursued?

5. What opinions do you have on the following issues or concerns in education in this province:

   a. curriculum, in terms of policy and decision-making, control, and content;

   b. school organization, in matters such as semestering, streaming, length of classes, length of school day, length of school year, departmentalization, and specialization;

   c. teachers, in terms of teacher training, competence, certification, and professional involvement;

   d. procedures used to evaluate schools, students, and teachers;

   e. the various institutional structures and agencies related to education in the province (such as The Department of Education, The Alberta Teachers' Association and its councils, parental and lay groups, the universities in Alberta, et al.), in terms of their aims, responsibilities, co-operation, and usefulness;

   f. other institutional structures and agencies related to education outside of the province (for example, The Canadian Teachers' Federation) which have internal effects;

   g. research, in terms of who is doing it, the areas and purposes, good examples, and vacuum areas; and

   h. other issues or concerns?

C. Perceptions of the Historical Influences and Issues in Alberta Education

1. What historical events, movements, and persons--outside of education--have had most impact on education in this province?
2. Which events, movements, and persons--in education in the past--have impressed you as being significant?
3. What major changes have occurred in education in Alberta during your career?
4. What are your views of the following issues which have been important, historically, in Alberta education:
   a. regional and/or economic disparity;
   b. the role of women;
   c. children's rights;
   d. minority rights;
   e. provincial autonomy; and
   f. other issues?

D. Perceptions of the Preferred State of Education in Alberta

1. How large a discrepancy do you think exists between the actual and the ideal in education? Is the discrepancy larger or smaller now than previously? In which areas is the discrepancy larger or smaller?
2. If you could wave a magic wand, what changes would you wish to have come about in education?
3. What would constitute an ideal teacher, school, or school system?

4. Should schools be leaders or reflectors of society?

E. Perceptions of the Probable Future of Education in Alberta

1. Assuming you have access to a crystal ball, what do you see happening in Alberta education between now and 1984?
2. What predictions would you make about the nature of education in the twenty-first century?
3. What assessment would you make of the desirability of the kind of future you envision in education?